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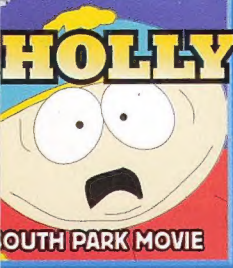

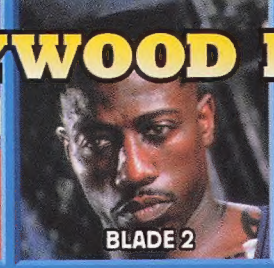

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ISSUES TO GO

87

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WIZARD® contents

THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 93 • MAY 1999

HEY, OVER HERE!

Tying into our year-long countdown to the new millennium, *Wizard* looks toward the future in each 1999 issue. On **page 40**, take a look at how Batman will survive the next millennium through big-budget films, the smash-hit animated "Batman Beyond," the super-hot comics and yes...even a *groan* Broadway musical.

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With the explosion of *Darkminds* and an upcoming *Punisher/Wolverine* mini-series, rising star Pat Lee finds himself under the gun. **By Scott Brick**

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42 BATMAN'S BIG 10
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Meet the mystery man in the Spidey suit that Marvel doesn't want you to know about. **By Jim McLauchlin**

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Wizard picks the ultimate animated lineup. **By the *Wizard* Staff**

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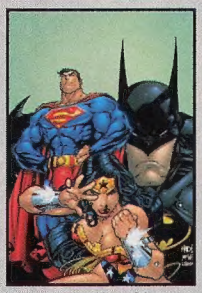

Batman/Darkness (left) was illustrated by Marc Silvestri and Joe Weems, and colored by Liquid Graphics. To find the answers to 10 of the biggest questions surrounding Batman, skulk to **page 40. JLA** was illustrated by Joe Madureira and Tom McWeeney, and colored by Liquid Graphics. To see how JLA and other hot comic properties would fare as animated series, tune in to **page 52! ABC** was illustrated by Gene Ha, and colored by Liquid Graphics. To learn the literary connections to ABC's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, stroll to **page 27.**

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78 STRANGERS IN PARADISE
Draw up a husband for Francine, and you can see your design drawn in an issue of *Strangers in Paradise* by creator Terry Moore. Plus, you'll get yer name in the credits, a page of original art and tons more *SiP* loot.

98 NOVA
Shine on! Win original *Nova* art, a signed script, signed comics and tons of Nova-rific goodies.

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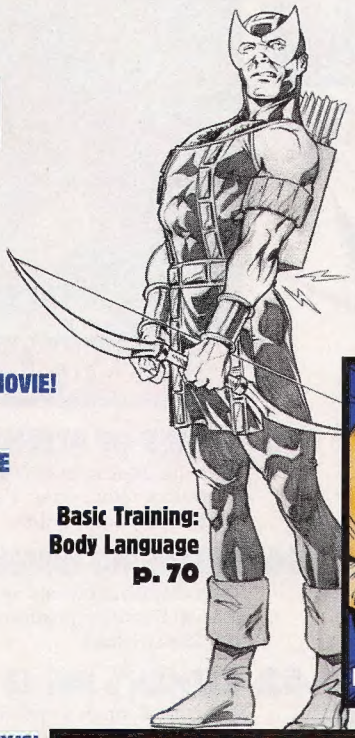

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EXCLUSIVE OFFER

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DREAMS OF DAWN #1/2

Wake up! Here's your *only* chance to get the exclusive *Dawn* #1/2 comic, featuring a story where the horned god Cernunnos wakes Dawn when a persecuted witch kills herself to get the Earth Mother's attention! By Joseph Michael Linsner! Rise your way to **page 80**.

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IS SPIDER-WOMAN A HERO OR VILLAIN?!
A LEAD-IN TO SPIDER-WOMAN #1!
THUNDERBOLTS #27
ARCHANGEL HAS LEFT THE X-MEN!
WILL HE JOIN THE T-BOLTS?!
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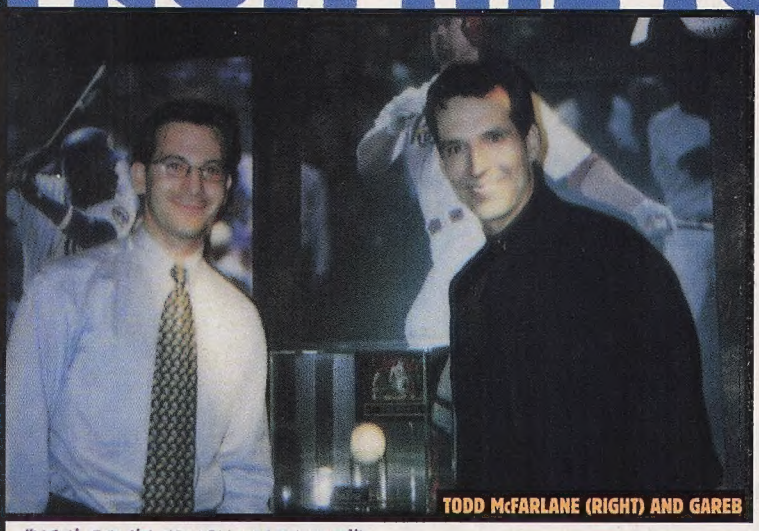

TODD McFARLANE (RIGHT) AND GAREB

"HEY! DON'T TOUCH MY BALLS!"

SEND IN THE TOYS

This has been a really crazy week. Every year, for one week in February, the entire toy industry descends upon New York for Toy Fair, a convention to preview all the new toys that will hit the shelves throughout the holiday season. And I always feel the same way at the end—if only I had these toys when I was growing up! I especially feel this way because of the really cool wrestling toys. I was a huge wrestling fan when I was younger. Now with the new Jakks Pacific toys that speak, the Stone Cold sayings you can download off the Internet and the infrared Sting speaking toys from Toy Biz, I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

In addition to all of the very cool wrestling toys, I also got a chance to witness an incredible media blitz on Todd McFarlane. On the first day of the show, Todd announced to the world that he had bought Mark McGwire's 70th-home-run baseball for slightly over $3 million. Todd certainly got his money back in public relations. Even more important, though, was his really great looking Austin Powers talking action figure, with hairy chest and all—"Oh, behave!"

There was so much to see! Unfortunately, I was not allowed to see any of the Star Wars toys, but from what I hear, I can't wait for them to come out.

In this issue, we have some great features! There's been a lot of buzz on Batman, and fans have a lot of questions. Will there be a new movie? Who's the new Batgirl? Well, we answer the questions on everyone's lips about the Dark Knight. We also break down Marvel's cool new title *Mutant X*, follow "the real" Spider-Man around New York City and sit down with *Darkminds* and *Punisher/Wolverine* artist Pat Lee. And look for our great feature on the TV cartoons we would love to see! Maybe if you pester the networks enough...

And if that's not enough, we have a great *Dawn* #1/2 offer! Don't miss it!

Only seven issues to go until *Wizard* 2000. Everybody will be talking about it!

See ya!

Gareb Shamus

P.S. Check out our new Website at www.wizardworld.com. There's lots of news and market reports updated every day!

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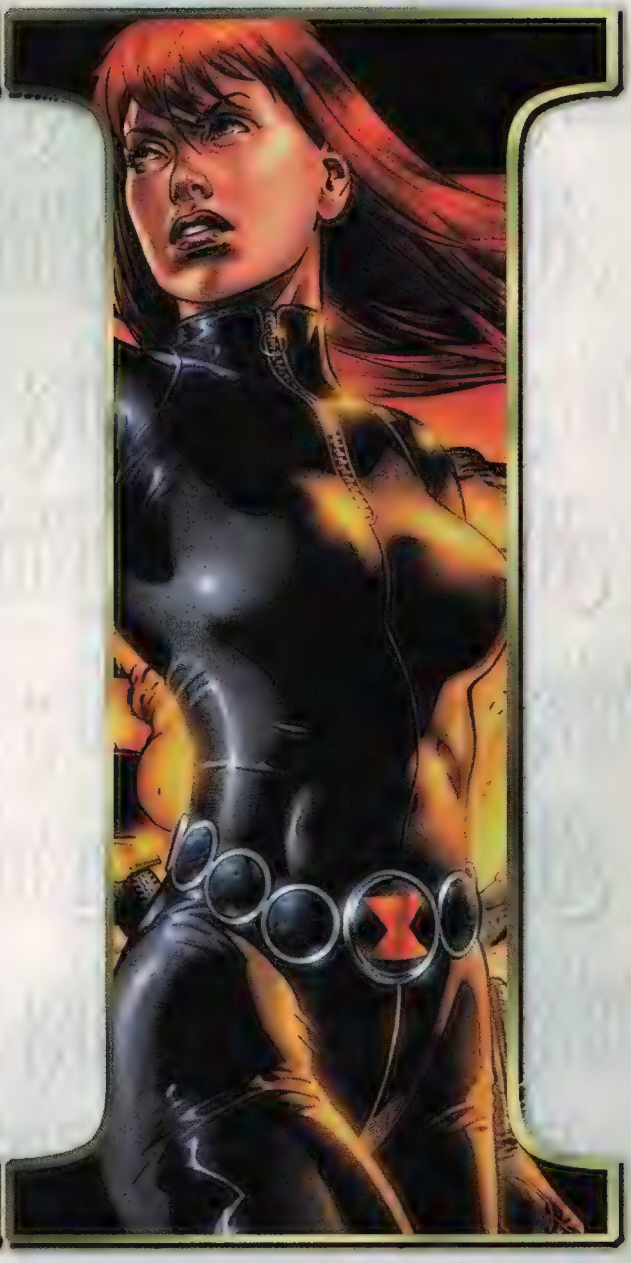
ABC AUDITED

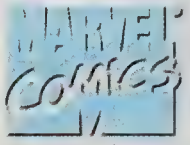
Because Once Is Never Enough

WOLVERINE/PUNISHER: REVELATION #1 (of 4)
Christopher Golden, Tom Sniegoski, Pat Lee & Alvin Lee



BLACK WIDOW #1 (of 3)
Devin Grayson & J.G. Jones

MARVEL KNIGHTS WAVE II HITS IN APRIL
From The Creators of DAREDEVIL, BLACK PANTHER & INHUMANS



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MAGIC WORDS

WCW'S RAVEN GETS VERTIGO... SEINFELD SNUBS SUPES... AND WAID WANTS WORLD PEACE!

LLadies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all ages, Wizard Entertainment proudly brings to you its "Magic Words" TAG-TEAM WRITERS OF THE MONTH!!!

Hi! I'm James Walker and I'm a designer here at *Wizard*. Joining me is André D. Shell from our research department. That's right, cats and kitties, this month Jim McLauchlin is on vacation and we're taking over his letters gig. And man, what a chore it is. We've seen Jim in his office gently weeping night after night and, to be quite honest, thought nothing of it. Then the grim reality of what he does every month became clear. After wading through piles and piles of letters about Wolverine's skeleton and the bosoms in *Danger Girl,* we were able to cull some pretty interesting questions and comments. The chaff? Hell, we just shuffled it back into Jim's "IN" box, so he can read those letters all over again next month. Now I'm going to tag in André to introduce our first letter, and just so you know, whenever you see them crazy italics it's him and this style of text is me. Cool, no?

Thanks partner. Our first letter is from someone who appears to be both a comics fan and a pro-wrestling fan. Now that's our kind of guy....

Dear Jim,

You've probably heard of the WCW wrestler Raven, and I was wondering, is Raven a Fan-Man (a word made up by Gene Simmons in *Wizard*'s KISS booklet giveaway)? I've seen him wear a *Sandman* shirt, a *Daredevil* shirt and an *Inhumans* shirt. Did he pick the shirts up because they look cool, or what? Where did he get the shirts? I can't find them.

Tuskin Roberts
Jackson, KY

Running the risk of catching an Even-Flow D.D.T., I called up Raven to ask him about his shirts. What I found out is that the former U.S. champ has a genuine appreciation for the comic book medium. "I love the Marvel Knights line," he says. I'm a big Kevin Smith fan, and his work on* Daredevil *is the best on that book since Frank Miller's stuff.* Inhumans *is also great. It could be the break-out book of the year because they're finally treating them as real characters instead of just freaks and monsters with no personality." The WCW superstar is also a big fan of* Watchmen, Swamp Thing *and especially* Sandman. *In fact, he likes the book so much he has a tattoo of the Neil Gaiman Sandman character on his back!

As far as the shirts go, call up the folks at Graphitti Designs at (800) 699-0115. They should be able to answer any questions you have...except maybe how to beat Raven.

Hey Yo,

I was looking through my old *Wizards*, and I found some interesting stuff. Firstly, you wrote that Kevin Smith is one very good writer, who has popularity both in the comic industry as well as the television industry. You said that he has always read comics, *Daredevil* being one, and now is writing it and a lot of attraction has gone his way. Secondly, in another issue, you guys said that Jerry Seinfeld has an interest in Superman. Thirdly, Superman lacks excitement.

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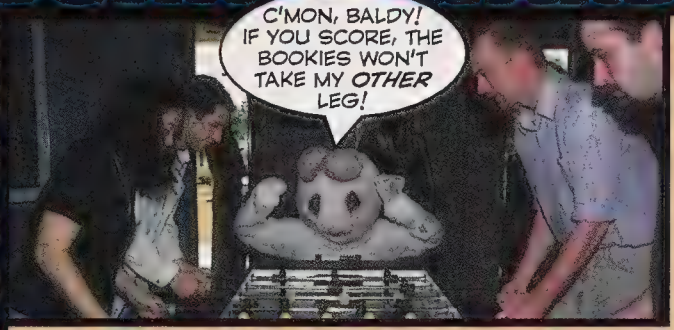
BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH



James and André take their favorite letter and spotlight it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Dear Magic Words,

I was just wondering if you think Yoda got any in all those 900-plus years. I think he did. I mean, when you're a Jedi master it has to be automatic.

Michael Shoykhet
Fair Lawn, NJ

Well, Mike, being that Yoda is a fictional character portrayed as a puppet, there is little chance of him "getting any" ever.

However, word around the Internet is that Salacious Crumb gets more butts than an ashtray...go figure.

Therefore, I propose we knock on Jerry Seinfeld's house door, jump him, tie him down and make him write Superman comics. I mean, he loves Superman, he's known worldwide and he wrote "Seinfeld." He's like Kevin Smith, um, but he's Seinfeld. You know he could bring excitement to the Superman titles, he's Seinfeld!

Can Bui
Mississauga, Canada

Hmmm? Would that work? Or would it be possible to get him on board without such extreme methods? Scott Nybakken at DC Comics says that until now, the Sein has expressed no such interest, but DC would be "very very interested if a proposal came in. Although I don't anticipate one."

"The kind of money that one makes writing comics pales to what Seinfeld makes sitting around and collecting residuals," Nybakken says.

Seinfeld himself was unavailable for comment, but I'd say the ball is in his court now. So what's it gonna be, Jerry?

Dear Staffers,

I was watching "Revenge of the Nerds" (the original) on TV last night. There is a character in the movie who is the dean of the university and got kicked around by the football coach played by John Goodman. At the end of the movie, the credits list this actor's name as David Wohl. Is this the same David Wohl who writes *Witchblade*? I met David Wohl (the writer) last summer in San Diego and the resemblance is uncanny. Please clear this matter up for me.

Al Reano
Burbank, CA

Seeking the truth, I contacted* Witchblade *scribe David Wohl and he told me, "I'm definitely not the guy from 'Revenge of the Nerds.'" After digging a little deeper though, I did find out there is indeed a small connection between the two. It seems that when he first started working at Marvel, he found out his boss' ex-wife had dated the David Wohl from the movie. Small world, huh?

Dear Wizard,

When the Flash starts running and breaks the sound barrier, why is it that a sonic boom is not created? If one is, why doesn't it deafen all of the people around him?

Max Kinman
Cincinnati, OH

It seems that's a pretty simple answer, Max. *Flash* scribe and damn nice guy Mark Waid summed it up like this: "As established in the 1960s [the Flash] creates a counter vibration as he runs—a sort of white noise—to cancel out the effects of the sonic boom."

Hmmm...sounds almost too easy. But not quite as easy as Marvel's "unstable molecule" phenomenon.

Dear Magic Words,

I have some questions:

1) Who is Mon-El? Superman's brother?

2) Who do you think would win in a fight: Gog or Doomsday?

3) Who killed the original Supergirl?

4) What's the deal with all of those Bizarros? For example: Bizarro Flash?

5) My little brother wants to know if can he have a Grendel and a Wonder Man action figure from you for Christmas?

Emory Miller
Saginaw, Michigan

I have some answers:

1) M'onel, formerly known as Mon-El, is a member of everyone's favorite fun-filled futuristic bajillion-member superhero team, The Legion of Super-Heroes. While the name may sound Kryptonian, it's actually an ancient Martian name meaning "Wanderer."

2) Gog. Look at the odds. Doomsday only beat Superman once, and Supes cleaned his clock twice (He even bested a Doomsday with the smarts of Brainiac!). Gog, on the other hand made a hobby of killing Supermen throughout time, picking up all sorts of tricks as he went along. So there's no way Doomie could win.

3) Marv Wolfman. Well, okay, actually it was the Anti-Monitor during Wolfman and George Pérez's epic *Crisis on Infinite Earths* 12-issue mini-series from 1985-86. If

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHRADI

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

you want to check it out, the series is being re-released in hardcover this year with a wraparound cover by Pérez and Alex Ross.

4) Good-bye. Bizarro James found question interesting and can't wait to answer it. Hello.

5) No. It's best your brother learn this now: Life is a sucking hole of despair, pain and anguish. That, and I'm stingy...so bite me.

Dear Wizard,

Do you know what makes me mad? Comic book creative team changes. But also, once a month, there's *Wizard*'s "Thumbing Off" in "Wizard News." Specifically, "thumbs up" to bringing Batgirl and Harley Quinn to the DC Universe, and the revival of Aunt May.

Sebastien Lecours
Quebec City, Canada

Wanna know what makes ME mad? When I bite into a York Peppermint Patty and don't get that "Arctic Breeze" they advertise, I get pretty peeved. What about you, André?

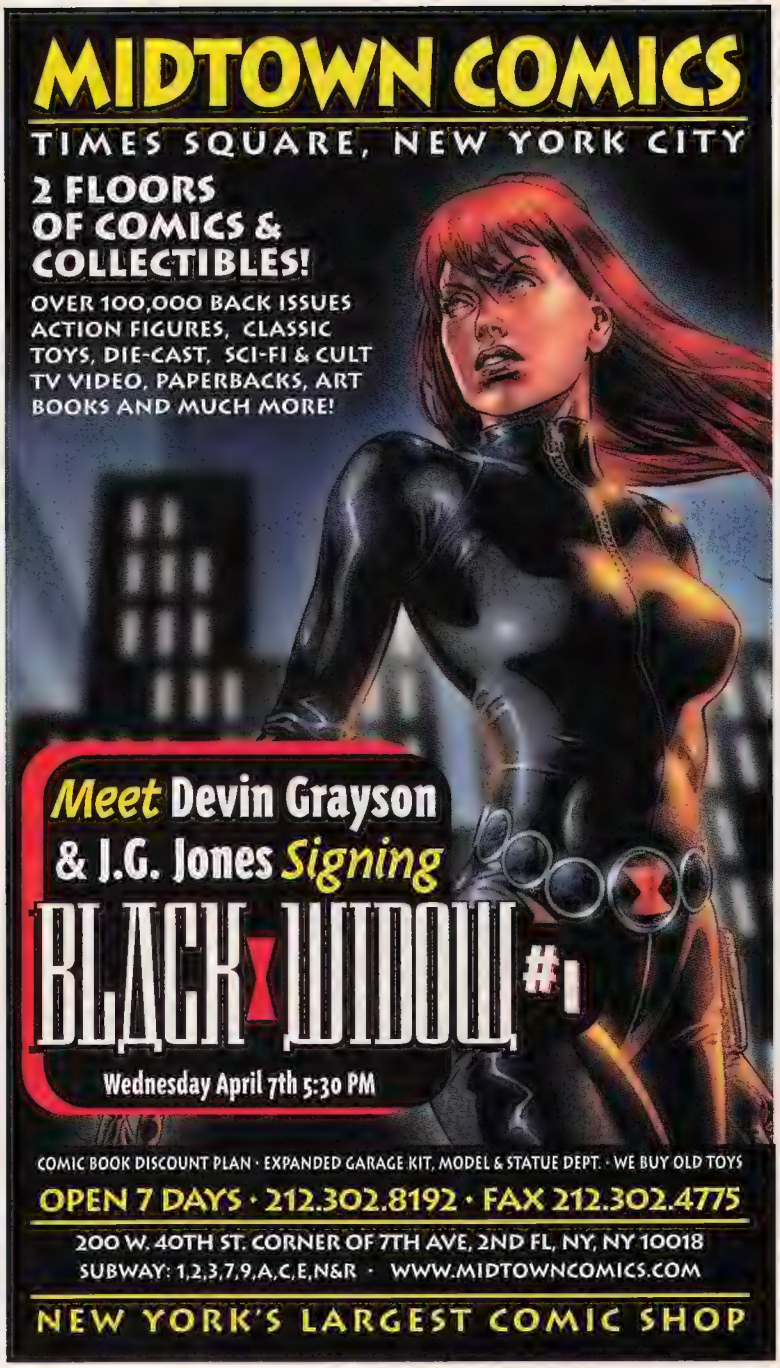
What gets me mad is when I'm already late and I get stuck behind the old guy wearing the Bavarian hat driving his doo-doo brown Cadillac 16 miles per hour down the highway.

As an extra bonus, I asked Raven what makes HIM mad. "Stupidity," he says. "An utter and complete lack of common sense. Especially when people can't follow specific instructions. If I say I want my eggs cooked a certain way, you better cook my eggs that way instead of the way you think I might like it. It's very simple." I guess you could say our good buddy has zero tolerance. Makes sense to me, so you better pay atttention, unless you wanna eat a folding chair for breakfast.

Dear Wizard,

Hawk and Dove are my favorite heroes. In the trade paperback collecting the 1988 *Hawk and Dove* mini-series, Karl Kesel teased readers with the possibility of resurrecting the team. Could this still be possible? If DC is interested, tell them that I, like every other Hawk and Dove fan, have already devised my own narrative of how the team would return (although I'm sure mine is more surprising than most).

Jacob Keehn
Perry, KS



You know what's really surprising? Last night I had a dream that a hamburger ate me!

Hey Wizfolk,

I commend Joe Madureira, one of my all-time favorite creators for his comments on the current state of comic book heroes [in "Magic Words," *Wizard* #89].

It seems the focus of recent years is creating someone with a

ANDREW NAPIER
138-06 233 St.
Rosedale, NY 11422
Age: 14 Sex: M
Likes: Cliffhanger titles, *Daredevil*, *Aria*

BRIAN PADUA
138 Holland Ave
Staten Island, NY 10310
Age: 16 Sex: M
Likes: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, "Sabrina the Teenage Witch"

REBECCA STANFORD
112 W. Bridge St., Apt. 3
Morrisville, PA 19067
Age: 23 Sex: F
Likes: *Vampirella*, *Fathom*, anime

VINCE VASQUEZ
P.O. Box 435
Montclair, CA 91763
Age: 18 Sex: M
Likes: *Witchblade*, *Fathom*, Spidey books

ALLEN NAPIER
HC69 Box 400
Arjay, KY 40902
Age: 20 Sex: M
Likes: *JLA*, Superman titles, *Astro City*

TOMMY SUNNY
3130 S. 211 E. Ave.
Broken Arrow, Okla 74014
Age: 14 Sex: M
Likes: All X-Men titles, all Batman titles, *Elfquest*

STEVE JACKSON
7111 Humann Ct.
Lincoln, NE 68516
Age: 15 Sex: M
Likes: manga, anything independent/small press

certain coolness factor or sexiness about them and a new unheard of power. Well after seeing 28,004 cookie-cutter heroes, us readers get bored.

Josh Nordyke
Grandville, MI

Sadly, Josh, as in almost everything, the homogenized product does seem to win out in the end. By creating characters and series that borrow on successful trends, comic book publishers are almost guaranteed to see some sort of return for their investment.

Is there a way to make the situation change? You betcha! Your vote is cast every time you plunk down your cash and pick something that is a little bit different from the norm. Sure, a lot of times it's a crap shoot. But in a risk-vs.-reward situation, it's worth it. You can also ask you friendly neighborhood comic store owners to hedge your bets. I'm afraid I can't offer any advice myself 'cause I stray towards mostly mainstream superhero stuff such as *JLA*, *Green Lantern* and the rest of the DC Universe. I must admit, however, that I find *Preacher* to be the best comic book on the stands today, and that's about as far from the "norm" as they come.

Dear Wizard,
I have been trying to write a book for a long time now and I am stuck. Can you help me?

Charles Benfield
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

I have been trying to write a book for a long time now and I am André. But seriously, all I can tell you is what my high school history teacher Mr. Mollohan used to say: "Remember the three Ds...desire, determination and discipline." That, and read anything and everything you can get your hands on. Especially your sister's diary.

Wizard,
I was just wondering—if you had three wishes, what would you wish for?

Eric Hawell
Rembert, SC

All I want is peace on Earth, an end to world hunger and an army of naked supermodels who bend to my every whim. I know, I know, the third wish seems like a bit much. But look at it this way: doesn't the man who ended hunger and brought forth peace deserve a harem of buxom bikini queens? Who's the selfish one now?

Since we had Mark Waid on the phone we decided to ask him the same question. "World peace, a lifetime subscription to *Wizard* and for Marvel to stop suing their freelancers." Thanks Mark! The first one made us warm inside, the second one made us blush and the third one made us uncomfortable.

Hooray for wishes!

Dear Cap'n Jim,
I have a few questions, all of which I wish you'd answer...

1) Is there some sort of giant dictionary of superheroes, which I could consult any time I wish to learn the deaths, origins, as well as any other major events in the lives of any hero I chose?

2) Who took my pants?

3) I need a girlfriend.

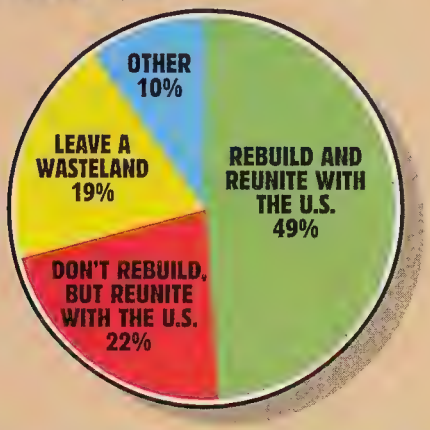
Chris Meeks
West Point, IL

1) Well, unfortunately there is no all encompassing book that covers all heroes everywhere. However, DC

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

SURVEY SAYS

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN TO GOTHAM CITY?



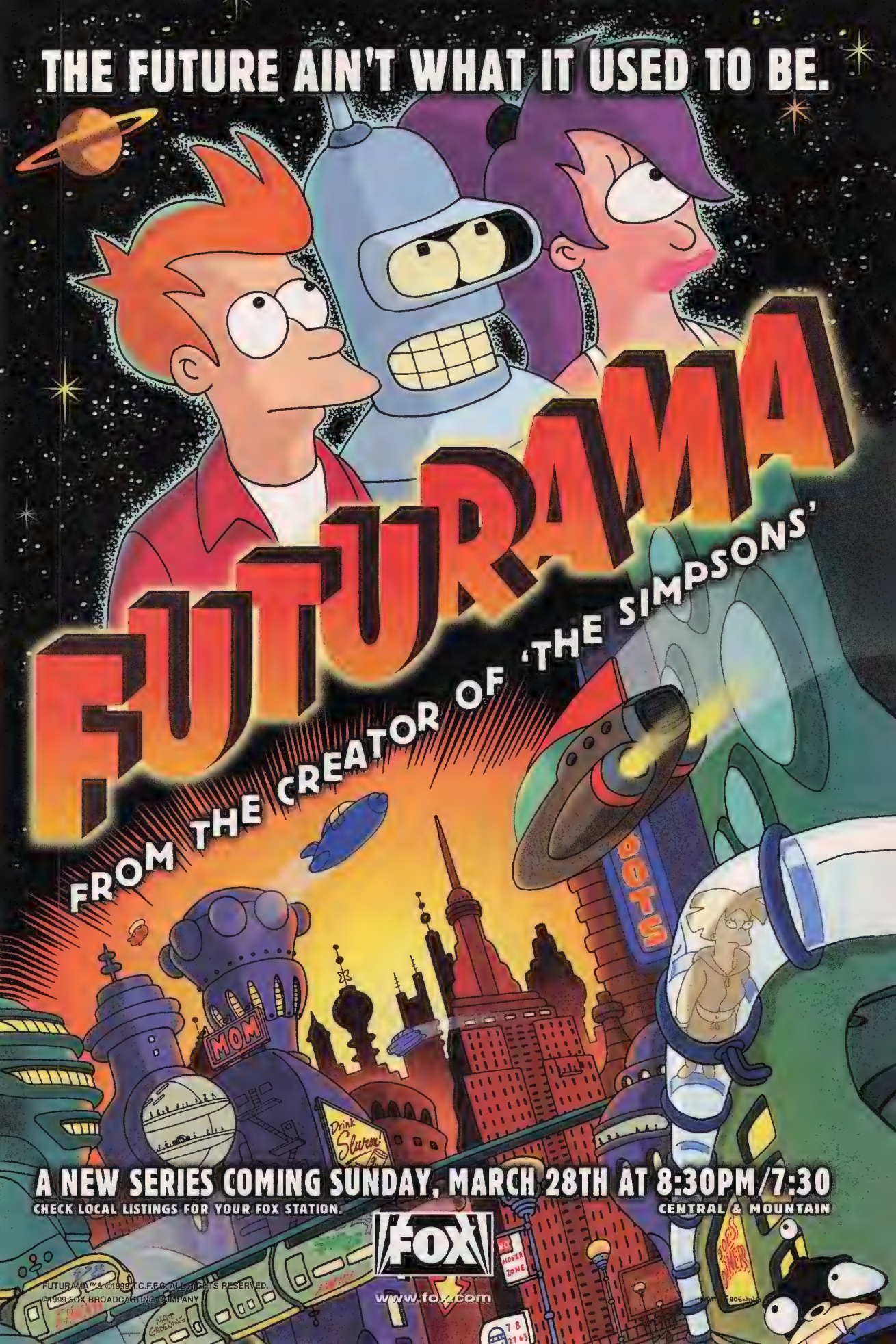
Gotham City is no more, thanks to the year-long "No Man's Land" storyline. Ravaged by an earthquake and excised from the United States, Gotham City is a Grade-A-plus mess. So we asked, in an online poll (www.wizardworld.com), what fans would like to see happen to Gotham after the "NML" arc is finished.

Forty-nine percent of fans wanted to see Gotham somehow restored and rebuilt, reinforcing Batman's resolve to protect his home. "Batman is about a man overcoming adversity and loss to become a hero," one voter noted. "Gotham's rebuilding should be about a city overcoming adversity and loss to become whole again."

Surprisingly, there was a contingent that prefers Gotham in its current condition. "A super-violent Batman would kick ass!" declared one voter, who obviously knows a thing or two about the Dark Knight.

As far as the 10 percent "Other" category, most were sarcastic uses of DC's new "Hypertime" concept. Said another voter, "They should take Gotham from directly pre-quake and just Hypertime it onto the current Gotham, effectively making nothing happen at all." Uhh, maybe we should just Hypertime this poll. ■ VICTOR TAYBACK

DAN DRUFF 7029 Laupher Ln. Hazelwood, MO 63042 Age: 18 Sex: M Likes: *Kabuki*, *Purgatori*	**MYSTIC** 102 W. Tenn. Ave. Crewe, VA 23930 Age: 21 Sex: F Likes: Image titles, Marvel titles	**JOHN B. LAWSON** 5600 Tramore Rd. Baltimore, MD 21214 Age: 28 Sex: M Likes: X-Men books, *Buffy*, *Avengers*	**CHRIS MARTINEZ** 2007 Ballard Dr. Las Vegas, NV 89104 Age: 19 Sex: M Likes: *Battle Chasers*, *Darkchlyde*, anime/manga	**SELENE MOON** 1422 Perry St. Des Plaines, IL 60016-4432 Age: 21 Sex: F Likes: *Kabuki*, Top Cow titles	**JOHNATHAN SUMMAGE** 9560 Faggard Road Beaumont, Texas 77707 Age: 19 Sex: M Likes: Batman and Superman books, *Uncanny X-Men*	**RYAN SARMIENTO** 404 Foxpark Dr. Pomona, CA 91767 Age: 19 Sex: M Likes: *Pitt*, *Wolverine*, *Weapon Zero*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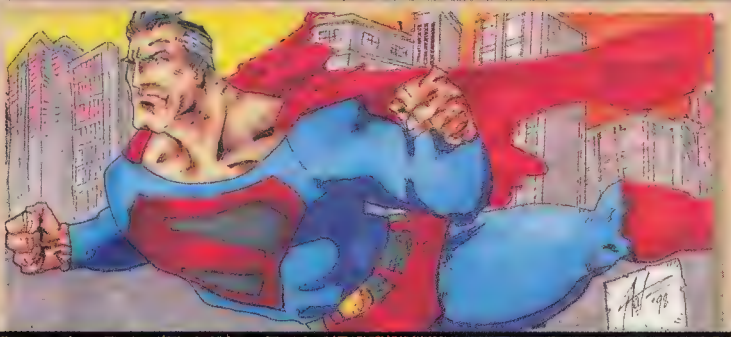
LETTER ART

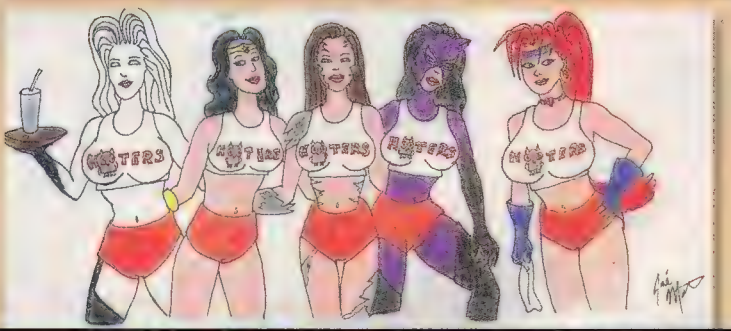
Each fan who has his letter art printed this month wins a Laser-Mat print of Captain America, Daredevil or Spider-Man from Lasermach Inc., plus a copy of this month's issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The talented creator of this month's best envelope will win all three Laser-Mats listed above, plus a signed copy of *Wizard*. (Prizes for this contest are provided by Lasermach, the company least likely to sell hammers to the United States Army for $1,150 apiece.) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address and a list of characters depicted on the back of the envelope. *¡Buenas suertes!*

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE

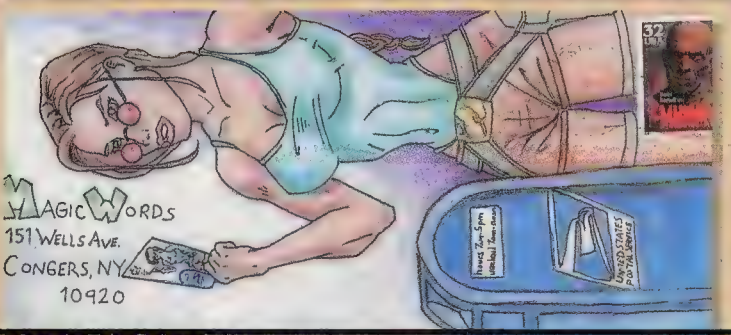
HARLEY QUINN Harley D. Weibling Clovis, NM



KINGDOM COME SUPERMAN Wayne Stuntz Jr. Austin, TX



SUPER HOOTERS' BABES Jose Maturino Raleigh, NC



LARA CROFT Chris Meeks West Point, IL

and Marvel, have encyclopedic books that can help. DC's currently releasing its *Secret Files and Origins* one-shots starring its core heroes and Marvel is tentatively planning on releasing a revised edition of its *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe.*

2) Err...

3) Maybe if you kept better track of your pants, you would have a girlfriend, dillweed.

Wizard,

Will one of the beautiful *Wizard* girls be my naked pen pal?

Brian Stratton
Pottstown, PA

Absolutely.

Unfortunately, our time here as "Magic Words" writers is just about up. Speaking for the both us, I gotta tell you it's been a blast. We've enjoyed answering fans' questions, cutting on morons and basically being given the chance to say whatever the #$*% we want to literally hundreds of thousands of people. Can you feel it? It's called POWER, baby! The only bad thing is that now we have to go back to being scrubs. You can change that, though. If you, the people, liked what we had to offer, write to Wizard! Tell them you want more! Tell them you can't get enough! Tell them...ah, forget it. We know Jim's the man, and we thank him for these five minutes. So Jim, we're glad you got some rest, next month it's back to business, and as a wise man once told us..."Give 'em hell, Harry!"

James Walker
André D. Shell

— James A. Walker and André D. Shell

Wizard Research Assistant André D. Shell and Designer James Walker have several naked pen pals each. Jealous?

Send letters to:
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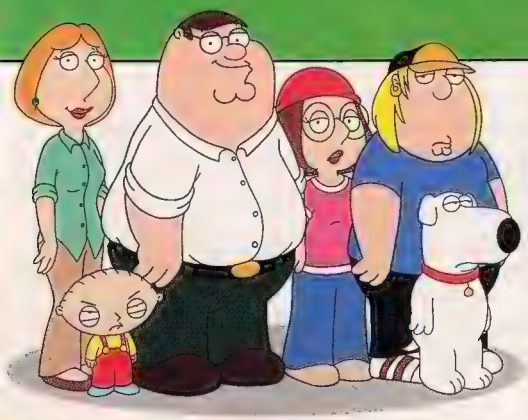

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LOEB, KELLY GET 'SUPER'

Hipper creators, new 'unlinked' format to spark Superman titles

At long last, there's a new look up in the sky.

DC Comics, responding to sagging sales and negative reviews, has slated big changes for its icon Superman. Two new writers—Jeph Loeb and Joe Kelly—have jumped aboard the Superman creative train along with artists Ed McGuinness and German Garcia. Creators Stuart Immonen, Mark Schultz and Doug Mahnke have survived the purge, remaining on the team. Karl Kesel, Dan Jurgens and Louise Simonson—all of whom had been with the Superbooks for five or more years—have been replaced.

All the creative changes are scheduled to take place effective issues shipping in October.

"The new idea is to have a different flavor to each book," Superman Group Editor Eddie Berganza said.

FACE LIFT It's a shame we gotta wait until September to see former *Deadpool* guy McGuinness (his art shown above) add punch to the Superman books.

LOEB

The infusion of new blood kicks off with Loeb (writer for *Superman for All Seasons*) and McGuinness (*Deadpool*), who will start the new "Super" order with a bang in October's *Superman* #151.

"Nobody likes to do 'Superman punches big stuff' more than I do," Loeb said. "I'm going to start each issue with the thought: 'This is a job for Superman.' Bank robbers are for the police. Superman tackles things the cops can't handle. He'll be facing villains that could kill him."

Loeb will be dialing up the danger factor on villains, revamping them to "see how we can get Superman's classic villains to be more of a threat."

In addition, *Superman* will carry the "classic" flavor. "Jeph did it in *Superman For All Seasons* and people loved it," Berganza said. "I'd be really dumb if I didn't go out and get him after that."

Loeb is sure that McGuinness' manga-esque artwork will help him carry this off. "We went looking for an artist who could bring the POW! to Superman, and still do the quiet moments that people seem to like in my writing," Loeb said. "I couldn't be happier."

KELLY

Kelly and Garcia, who collaborated on *X-Men* "will put the action in *Action*," when they take over October's *Action Comics* #760. "Giant robots, crazy planets, you name it, it'll be slam-bang stuff," Kelly said. *Action* will also be the place where Superman meets the rest of the DC Universe. "It's new to me, so I'm going to explore it," he said. "Superman's relationships are so cool. The way he deals with Batman is completely different from the way he deals with Superboy."

Berganza adds that *Action* will be "our lighthearted book. Joe brought that to all his Marvel work, so he should nail it here."

THE HOLDOVERS

Immonen will remain as a plotter and penciler for the Superman team, but will shift to *Adventures of Superman*. He will get dialogue help from Mark Millar (*Superman Adventures*) and Immonen will also work on a 96-page Superman hardcover project. "We have a totally different dynamic now," Immonen said. "In that sense, maybe I've dodged a bullet. But I've been here for three-plus years, and things have always changed and evolved."

Immonen's *Adventures* will be what Berganza calls "our 'heart of Metropolis' book. Stuart's got the best feel for

real-people stories." Immonen also stays because of his art stylings. "He's got the most traditional Superman look," Berganza said. "He'll be our calm in the storm. His pages just feel the most *real*."

Schultz and Mahnke will get the chance to focus on the sci-fi angle of Superman in *Superman: The Man of Steel*, with mad scientists and a push toward a cyberpunk angle. "Mark nailed sci-fi on *Xenozoic Tales*, and that's where his interest lies," Berganza said. "It's something we've told all the writers to do—don't worry so much about how everything fits into a big story. Just take what you like and go for it."

THE NEW FORMAT

Format changes also take place in October. The four core Superman books (the quarterly *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* is canceled) will no longer be regularly linked. Each title will stand alone with its own storyline. "A kid can buy a book and enjoy it for what it is," Berganza said. "Three times in the first 12 months, things will link the books. But the links will be short. Only one lasts more than one month."

Despite all the changes, the crew promises this is not a reboot. "It's not a *Spider-Man: Chapter One* thing," Loeb said of Marvel's Spider-Man retooling. "It's just a re-focus on the character." Part of that focus will be a slimmed-down supporting cast. "In Metropolis, there's Perry White, Lois, Jimmy Olsen and Lex Luthor," Loeb said. "Those are the people that live there. And occasional supervillains come to town. In Smallville, there's Ma and Pa Kent, and Lana and Pete Ross. One thing we're going to do is make every subplot reflect back on Superman. He's the star."

With new talent in place, a plan is also in place that brings storylines up to August 2000. But don't expect another "Death of Superman."

"People keep asking, 'What's the big event?'" Loeb said. "I just say the big event is that every month we're going to tell damn good stories."

■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

Hawkman film stalls as Joel Shumacher is called in to work on costumes: "His nipples were already visible, so I had to work lower," commented famed director before destroying another franchise.

"Party of Five" expands cast: "Well...people seem to be really tired of Neve Campbell's whining and crying," explained Fox exec, "so we thought we'd add a cool robot and a black guy with a hat."

Geeks grow weary of virginity, prepare to "get some" by force. "You can only watch so much late-night Cinemax," winked pimply mess, "before you have to re-crystallize your dilithium."

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

COME, SON OF JOR-EL—KNEEL BEFORE ZOD!

JEPH LOEB

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Writer for *The Coven*, *The Witching Hour*, numerous Batman "Halloween" projects, 1998's *Superman For All Seasons* mini-series

FIRST SUPERMAN STORY READ: *Action Comics* #362–#366 from 1968. "The original 'Death of Superman.' Superman died from a plant-based poison, and the Bizarros saved him by throwing white Kryptonite at him, which kills plant life. Bizarros do bad thing."

FAVORITE SUPERMAN STORY: "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" from *Action* #583 and *Superman* #423. "[Writer] Alan Moore captured the magic of Superman and turned up the volume on his villains."

ONE THING HE WANTS TO DO: "I want to bring Superman up to be the number one best-selling comic book. That's where it belongs."

WHAT'S THE DRAW OF SUPERMAN?: "He's the first superhero. Everything else is somehow based on him. But he's the original guy."

JOE KELLY

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Writer for *Deadpool*, former X-Men writer

FIRST SUPERMAN STORY READ: "I can't remember the issue, but Superman was on the cover, and he had no powers. Krypto the Super-Dog was flying off to save the world. God, I love Krypto."

FAVORITE SUPERMAN STORY: *Action* #345, from January, 1967. "Clark Kent was exposed as Superman by Alan Funt on 'Candid Camera.' God, I like that goofball stuff."

ONE THING HE WANTS TO DO: "Make Clark and Lois feel young and fun and sexy and crazy. Readers will know this is not their father's Superman."

WHAT'S THE DRAW OF SUPERMAN?: "The draw is 60 years. People on every corner of the globe can identify Superman. I want to do something to build his next 60 years." ■ JM

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHRADER

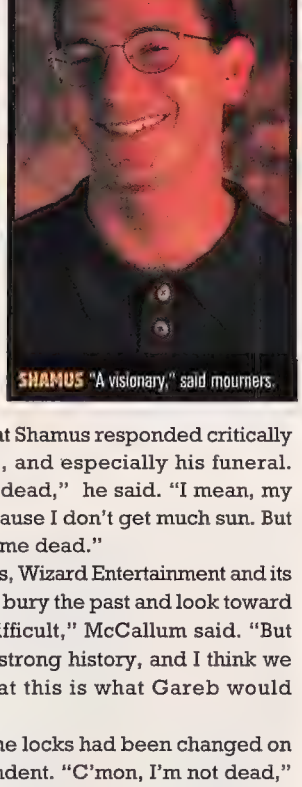
GAREB SHAMUS, 1969-1999

'Wizard' publisher unexpectedly passes away

The comic world mourned the passing of one of its leaders and most-respected statesmen as Gareb S. Shamus, founder of Wizard Entertainment, died of natural causes on April 1, 1999.

"I'm shocked," a mournful *Wizard* Editor Brian Cunningham said. "Just days ago, we were talking about future covers, and now he's gone. You never think about how fleeting life can be until it hits close to home."

Shamus, 29, moved quickly up the ladder of the publishing world. He started *Wizard* magazine at the tender age of 22. Within two years, after fighting through several bumps in the road, *Wizard* was recognized as a leader in the field. From there, Shamus went on to launch the role-playing magazine *InQuest Gamer* in 1995, and *ToyFare*, a magazine about collectible toys, in 1997. Shamus also purchased the former Chicago Comic Con in 1997, transforming it into the multi-media extravaganza Wizard World Chicago.



SHAMUS "A visionary," said mourners.

"Gareb was a visionary," noted Wizard Entertainment Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum in a touching eulogy delivered at the funeral. "With each move, he always knew what the fans wanted. He was an expert at figuring out what people wanted next. It was a pleasure working with him. He will be missed."

Meanwhile, an indignant Shamus responded critically to the news of his demise, and especially his funeral. "Uh...guys? I'm really not dead," he said. "I mean, my skin is kinda pasty-white 'cause I don't get much sun. But that's no reason to declare me dead."

Despite Shamus' protests, Wizard Entertainment and its publications stand ready to bury the past and look toward a new future. "It will be difficult," McCallum said. "But we've got good people, a strong history, and I think we all know in our hearts that this is what Gareb would have wanted."

Shamus, upon finding the locks had been changed on his office door, was despondent. "C'mon, I'm not dead," he whined. "Sure my social life may be dead now that I'm married, but the rest of me is still alive. Honest! Won't someone listen to me?"

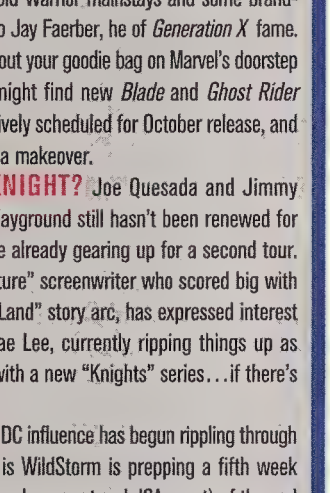
Shamus is survived by his wife, Lisa, and daughter, Allie. Shamus' brother, Stephen, is expected to take the reigns of Wizard Entertainment at some point in the near future. The first post-Shamus *Wizard* issue will be next month's #94, featuring a career retrospective.

"C'mon, guys. Don't do that," Shamus said in regards to the *Wizard* #94 plans. "It'll only cause problems. People will start to believe this stuff. I mean it. I'm getting mad now."

Still, *Wizard* #94—and all future issues—will march on as planned. "It's the only thing we can do," Cunningham said. "The most fitting tribute I can think of to Gareb is to continue the work he started." ■ JM

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY



GET READY TO RUMBLE! Hey! Toy Biz does WCW/nWo pro wrasslin' action figures! And Toy Biz owns Marvel Comics! Well, put two and two together and you'll find that Marvel has a line of four WCW/nWo comics that it hopes to launch this fall. As soon as the contracts are done, the bell will ring for Marvel.

NEW NEW WARRIORS! The rumblings are true! A new *New Warriors* ongoing has creeped onto Marvel's plate for August release. The lineup? Look for a mixture of old Warrior mainstays and some brand-new heroes. The writer? Look to Jay Faerber, he of *Generation X* fame.

TRICKS AND TREATS! Hold out your goodie bag on Marvel's doorstep this Halloween and you just might find new *Blade* and *Ghost Rider* ongoing series. Both are tentatively scheduled for October release, and both characters are slated for a makeover.

SECOND COMING OF KNIGHT? Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's "Marvel Knights" playground still hasn't been renewed for a second year. But J and J are already gearing up for a second tour. Bob Gale, the "Back to the Future" screenwriter who scored big with the initial "Batman: No Man's Land" story arc, has expressed interest in a "Knights" project. And Jae Lee, currently ripping things up as Inhumans artist, will be back with a new "Knights" series...if there's a year two.

WILD STORMS AT DC! The DC influence has begun rippling through WildStorm Productions. Word is WildStorm is prepping a fifth week event (similar to DC's recent Kingdom event and JSA event) of themed books for late summer.

ALEX IS AWESOME! Superstar painter Alex Ross may team up with his hero–writer Alan Moore–for an Awesome Entertainment one-shot this fall or winter that Ross will paint in its entirety. The character involved? Well, Ross has always liked Supreme...

we looked it up

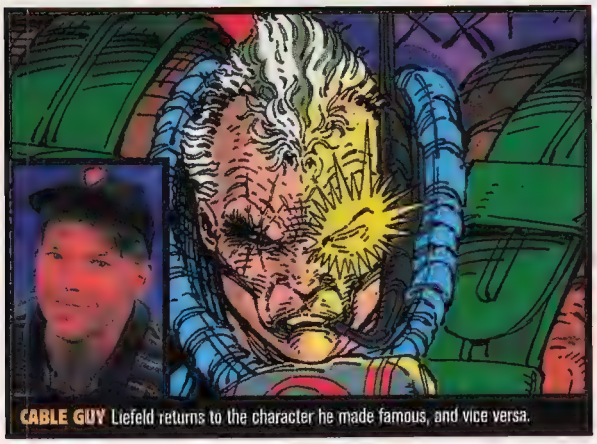
WHO? WHERE? WHY?

KE•SEL, KARL *(KEY sul, KARL)*, proper noun, 1959-present; 1 Current writer of *Superboy* and *Batman and Superman: World's Finest* 2 Longtime comic inker whose credits include *Superman* and various Indiana Jones projects 3 The drunken mating call of a locksmith looking for both extra money and an exceedingly good time.

KESEL PHOTO COURTESY OF KARL KESEL. SHAMUS PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADI.

LIEFELD HOOKS UP WITH 'CABLE'

Creator 'thought it was a prank'



CABLE GUY Liefeld returns to the character he made famous, and vice versa.

Will the third time be a charm? Rob Liefeld hopes so. For the third time in his career, controversial creator and Awesome Entertainment President Liefeld is at Marvel Comics. And this time, he's in familiar territory with Cable, a character he created. "I was contacted by [Editor] Mark Powers. I thought it was a prank," Liefeld said. "But he was sincere."

Sincere enough that Liefeld will start co-writing (with Joe Pruett of *Magneto Rex*) and penciling *Cable* with July's #71. So what of the book's previous creators?

Penciler José Ladrónn was removed by Marvel in favor of Liefeld, and writer Joe Casey chose to step aside with him. "José and I had a nice run," Casey said. "On a different book, I would have gladly worked with Rob. But José and I had a 50/50 partnership. Rob'll do a great job because he cares about that character."

Liefeld will take right up where Casey and Ladrónn left off; the 12-year-old mystery of "The Prophecy of the Twelve" and a millennium showdown with arch-nemesis Apocalypse are still on track for *Cable*.

Liefeld, who bolted Marvel once to help form Image Comics and was later involved with the controversial "farming out" of characters in "Heroes Reborn," looks forward to the challenge. "Any book other than *Cable*, and I wouldn't have considered it. But he's like my first-born son," Liefeld said. ■ JM

OOPS...

OUR BAD, DUDE!

The Cameron Diaz photo on page 69 of *Wizard* #91 should have been credited to the Everett Collection....Alex Ross rescinds and apologizes for his remarks regarding Jason Pearson in *Wizard's Alex Ross Special*....INTERN ALERT! DC's internship info has been changed. DC inquiries should go to: Marc Young, c/o Warner Bros. Human Resources; 1325 Avenue of the Americas; New York, N.Y. 10019. DC only takes college students as interns...*Wizard* would like to retract issue #91. It wasn't very funny. We were drunk at the time and screwed up. *Wizard* regrets the error.

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Prophecy of the SOUL SORCERER™

The battle for our soul begins in May!

As seen on TV

ARCANE

Distributed by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

NEWS&NOTES

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM
Alcohol abounds in May's *Cerebus* #242. Jaka polishes off a bottle of wine while waiting for Cerebus, who's off apologizing for his improper cocktail-hour behavior.

ARCHANGEL COMICS
Former *Black Panther* artist Mark Texeira will break new ground with Mark Texeira's *Pscythe*, the story of an angel who's fallen to Earth... Also from Archangel, Ray Lago will tackle a "good-girl, sci-fi adventure" called *Artemis & Hunn*. Expect both books in late '99.

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT
A boatload of sketches and short stories from *Darkminds* artist Pat Lee can be found in May's *Pat Lee: Fusion Station* one-shot... Alex Ross, everyone's favorite painter, does the variant cover business for May's *Supreme: The Return* #1.

CHAOS! COMICS
Crimson's Humberto Ramos contributes a variant cover to *Chastity: Lust For Life* #1, available in May.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Rip the Empire a new hole with May's *Star Wars: X-Wing Rogue Squadron–In the Empire's Service* trade paperback. The 96-page book reprints the story of Baron Fel, the Empire's greatest TIE fighter pilot.

DC COMICS
Revisit the 853rd century in May with the *DC One Million 80-Page Giant*. It contains a new Justice Legion A story by *JLA* scribe Grant Morrison.
• Cliffhanger
May's *Crimson* trade paperback reprints 160 pages of blood-sucking vampire goodness by Humberto Ramos.
• Vertigo
The Sandman Presents: Love Street features a 1960s tale of *Hellblazer*'s John Constantine in May... *Books of Magic* is Vertigo's new happenin' address. Look for an annual in 1999, a *Molly* mini-series featuring the popular supporting character and a *Books of Faerie* ongoing, spinoff series.

HARRIS COMICS
In May's *Vampirella: World's End* #3, busty blood-sucker Vampirella battles the forces of Heaven while the fate of Earth hangs in the balance. *World's End* also features a sweet back-up Pantha story drawn by *Black Panther*'s Mark Texeira.

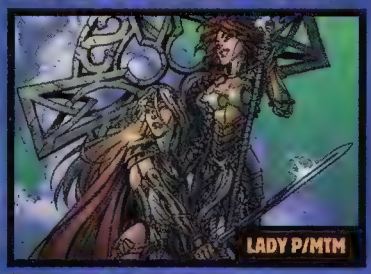

LADY P/MTM

IMAGE COMICS
Dan Norton (*WildC.A.T.s*) has been tapped to illustrate the *Lady Pendragon/More Than Mortal* crossover in May and June. The two-part

cont'd →

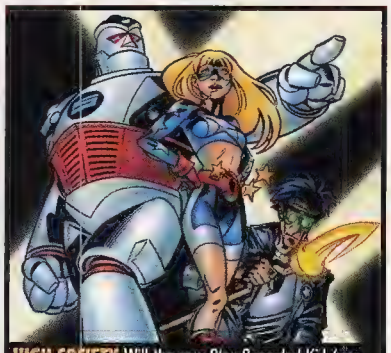
NEW 'KID,' NEW JSA

Get ready for a female Star-Spangled Kid

There's a new Star-Spangled Kid in town. And this time, he's a she.

"Yep, it's a girl," writer Geoff Johns, who tackled *Star-Spangled Comics* in DC Comics' March JSA event said. And this new Kid will lead into two new, ongoing series.

May's *Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E.* #0 kicks things off, featuring appearances by the original Golden Age Star-Spangled Kid and Starman, showing how the first Kid came into possession of Starman's cosmic belt. The following month, our new girl dons the belt and begins her ongoing adventures in issue *S.T.R.I.P.E.* #1.


HIGH SOCIETY Will the new Star-Spangled Kid (center) and her robot join Starman (right) in the JSA?

"This young girl's mom gets remarried, and she moves to Nebraska with a step-father," Johns said. "She finds out, going through his stuff, that he used to be a superhero sidekick named Stripesy. To piss him off, she steals the cosmic belt, makes a new costume, and becomes the new Star-Spangled Kid." Meanwhile, Stripesy has built an 8-foot robot. "It's programmed to follow her around, keep her out of trouble," Johns said. "But it doesn't always succeed."

The new Kid and her robot partner will find themselves caught up in Justice Society adventures just in time for June's *JSA* #1. Writers James Robinson and David Goyer have confirmed the Golden Age Wildcat, Flash, Green Lantern, Starman, Atom and Hourman—along with a new Hawkgirl and Sand—will be initial members of the new team...but remain mum on Star-Spangled Kid. "We will be dealing with virtually every character that has a connection to the JSA," Goyer admitted. "Even if they're not members, we have stories that will deal with them. And our roster will change over the first year, so who's to say if they'll be members or not?" ■ SCOTT BRICK

TODD COUGHS UP SMACK FOR BIG MAC'S LAST JACK

Looks like the rumors *are* true: Todd McFarlane has balls—nine of them, to be exact. And he paid over $3 million to get them.

BALLS Todd loves to fondle 'em.

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADLE

The *Spawn* creator shelled out nearly $3.4 million to acquire St. Louis Cardinal Mark McGwire's record-setting 70th home run ball and other homer balls hit by Chicago Cubs star Sammy Sosa and McGwire during the 1998 baseball season at a Jan. 12 sports memorabilia auction. McFarlane, a self-proclaimed "psycho fan," finally went public with the purchase at a February press conference during the first day of the 1999 International Toy Fair.

"I'm not Donald Trump," admitted McFarlane, whose $2.7 million purchase for McGwire's 70th represented the largest amount ever paid for a piece of sports memorabilia. "I blew my life savings on this."

McFarlane has dubbed the nine baseballs "The McFarlane Collection" and he hopes to display the collection at the Baseball Hall of Fame and at major league baseball parks around the country.

McFarlane—who vows that any money generated from displaying the collection will go to charity—has no intention of parting with the balls, even if McGwire's record falls.

"If the record falls," McFarlane said, "I go from the idiot who spent $3 million on the crown jewel of memorabilia to the idiot who spent $3 million on a $5 ball." ■ JOE YANARELLA

UP-TO-THE-MINUTE COVERAGE ON YOUR FAVORITE MUTANTS

X-MEN WATCH

- Welcome the newest member of the X-Men family: Terry Kavanagh. The current *X-Man* writer–and Alan Davis' former *Excalibur* editor–will be helping regular *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men* writer Davis by scripting some of his plots over the next few months. "This is for Alan's comfort level," Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras said. "Alan's worked well with Terry before, and their synergy should be incredible."
- Designated jack-of-all-penciling-trades Brandon Peterson has his next X-assignment: A three-issue June-July-August mini-series tentatively titled *Astonishing X-Men*. The reason for the series...?
- ...It's not nailed down yet, but after the events of February's *X-Men* #87 (Wolverine wanted to kill Magneto and the rest of the team wasn't too crazy 'bout the idea), Wolverine may be ditching the X-Men and going slightly bonkers. That may lead to the need for some of his old X-partners (Maybe Cyclops and Phoenix?) to go track him down. And speaking of the pivotal *X-Men* #87...
- ...it sure looked like Wolvie had his adamantium claws back in that issue. But it was a mere art screw-up that–Somehow!–no one caught.
- And as we gear up for a double-sized *Uncanny X-Men* #375 (look for it in September) Brandon Peterson's pencil will get a workout. He'll be pitching in on #375, and alternating issues with regular *Uncanny* artist Adam Kubert as the title goes biweekly in August.

'JLA' GOES APE!

Smelly simians pick bugs off each other

Memo to the Justice League: Go rent "Planet of the Apes." It might make for good research.

Beginning this July, all JLA-related annuals (including *Batman*, *Martian Manhunter*, *Aquaman* and *Superman*) will tie into "JLApe," a massive crossover detailing the team's struggle with smarty-pants apes bent on conquering the world. Editor Dan Raspler explained that the simians have some nasty technology that just might do the trick. "Basically, the gorillas are trying to convert the human race into apes with their special morphogenetic field resonators," he revealed. Morphogenetic field resonators? "Yeah," Raspler said. "They have a gigantic one up in space."

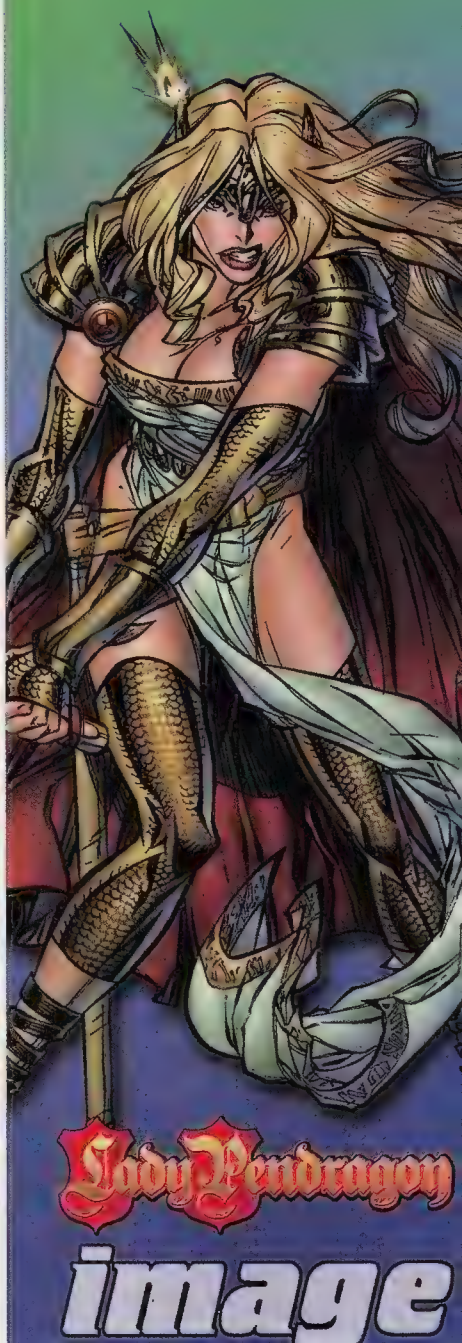
It also seems as if some of the monkeys have personal agendas with certain JLA members. "Grogomesh, the gigantic robot gorilla, must fight Superman," Raspler said. "It's after the Pentagon, you see. Abu-Gita, the high-priestess of the apes, attacks Wonder Woman on Paradise Island. If one of them succeeds, all the dominoes fall into place." The aforementioned technology also allows the apes to alter the enemy in their own image: Impulse, for example, becomes Chimpulse. Aquaman may become the Sea Monkey. And that's just for starters.

All this monkey business is a far cry from typical *JLA* fare, recalling the more lighthearted tone of Silver Age '60s tales. "It's a big, fun event," Raspler promised. "Even though it's a desperate, desperate struggle, don't be surprised if you see a banana." ■ JAKE ROSSEN

CHIMP CHANGE Hot monkey love? Feces throwing? Hairless asses? Get ready for the new JLA.

This May and June, witness the tale of two great warriors, who will meet one another on the battlefield of an age-old feud.

Britain v. Ireland



crossover introduces MTM to Image Comics.

• Avalon Studios

Chris Bachalo, late of *Uncanny X-Men*, provides an alternate cover to May's *Aria* #5.

ARIA

• Highbrow

Rapture is back, and boy, is she pissed! Then again, you would be too if you were recently dead. Confused? Writer/artist Erik Larsen explains all in May's *Savage Dragon* #61.

• Odyssey

Odyssey is a brand-spankin' new Image Comics line that gets going this April with *Atomic Toybox*, the tale of a device that can change imagination into reality. Aaron Lopresti (*Xena*) writes and draws. Then look for Ron Randall's sci-fi *Trekker* in May as the second Odyssey release.

TREKKER

• Top Cow Comics

Sara Pezzini discovers the origin of the ancient Witchblade gauntlet in *Witchblade* #31 this May.

KENZER AND COMPANY

Avalon #6 will bring tales of swords, sorcery and fantasy to fans in April, courtesy of creators Manny Vega and Blaine Loyd.

MARVEL COMICS

May's *Avengers 1999* annual explains why no new Avengers team was formed when the old guard went missing during "Heroes Reborn." Ongoing *Avengers* scribe Kurt Busiek writes, and Leonardo Manco handles the art. June's double-sized *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #12 is the last issue for writer Mark Waid.

NIGHTHAWK ENTERTAINMENT

May sees the debut of *Prophecy of the Soul Sorcerer*. The story features the newest of a line of sorcerers protecting Earth from the forces of Hell.

PENNY FARTHING PRESS

Decoy #3 brings Luck and Decoy together for the first time, only to throw more problems into their lives. For instance: Do either of them know how to fix a broken police station? Find out in May. Writer/creator Trainor Houghton brings on

cont'd →

DC PIONEER VINCE SULLIVAN PASSES AWAY

First editor helped discover Batman, Superman

Vince Sullivan, DC Comics' first editor, passed away after a battle with cancer February 3. He was 88.

Sullivan is credited with saying "Yes" to a couple of cartoonists who encountered rejection everywhere else. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster brought their Superman project to Sullivan in 1938, who received it with an open mind and made it a staple in *Action Comics*. Lightning struck twice soon after, when Sullivan commissioned Bob Kane to create an equally intriguing hero. Kane came up with Batman.

Mark Evanier (*Groo*) was just one of many saddened by his passing. "Most editors never come across one hit with the magnitude of a Superman or Batman," Evanier said. "Vince gets credit for both. He was a quiet, humble man who never bragged on what a pivotal and vital part he played in comic book history. Jerry Siegel spoke highly of him. Bob Kane spoke highly of him. We should all follow their lead." ■ JR

SUPER 'DAD' Sullivan's thumbs up led to the birth of Siegel and Shuster's Superman and Kane's Batman.

SULLIVAN PHOTO COURTESY OF DC COMICS.

THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

THE 'NEW' SUPERMAN: Finally, DC injects new life into the Superman books with the addition of creators Jeph Loeb, Joe Kelly, Mark Millar, Ed McGuinness and German Garcia. And the new "unlinked" format will unleash these guys to excite fans about the Man of Steel for the first time in years.

MARVEL TOONS RETURN: For the first time in two years a new season of Marvel cartoons is scheduled to debut with "Avengers" and "Spider-Man Unlimited" slated for fall '99. Now, come September, we'll be more jazzed than ever to wake up early on Saturday mornings.

BALLS: Everybody loves them. Todd McFarlane plunked $3 million for them. Matzoh-ball soup rules. Lucille Ball cracked us up. Balls are great. Except for blue balls. They're not very funny.

THUMBS DOWN

GAREB SHAMUS: For dying. Where the #$%&@ are our paychecks, dammit?

DOUG, JIM AND HARRY: You know what you did. And it's just plain wrong.

KITTENS: Enough already.

CHAOS! CHANGES FORMAT, RETURNS TO ROOTS

Evil Ernie, Lady Death ongoings put on hold

There's a new order coming to Chaos!

After nearly two years of featuring its characters in ongoing series, Chaos! Comics is sending the main attractions of the Chaos! cosmos back where they came from—the mini-series.

"It's our roots, and it's what our fans like best," Chaos! Publisher Brian Pulido said. "We'll tell the story that needs telling at the time, then move on. When the next story comes, it comes." Pulido thinks this format is how horror, a Chaos! staple, works best. "Look at Stephen King," he said. "It's not like he's doing *The Stand, Part 47*."

As part of the new world order, *Evil Ernie*, *Lady Death* and *Purgatori* ongoings will halt after April. Lady Death leads the new onslaught in May, with the four-issue *Lady Death: The Rapture* mini-series. A three-issue *Evil Ernie: Depraved* and four-issue *Purgatori: Goddess Rising* launch in June.

Pulido is also taking a personal stake in the books' success, as he returns to write both *Lady Death* and *Evil Ernie*. And the Lady is the key. "We're back to the focus," Pulido said. "She's harsh, she's hard-core, and she wins 'cause she's the most ruthless. The bitch is back, big time." Lady Death will get her chance to shine in *The Rapture*, as she plays the central role—and chooses a side—in the Judgment War between Heaven and Hell. "It will affect life on Earth," Pulido said, "because Hell has just risen up through the Earth. In Las Vegas, of course."

Chaos! licensed titles such as *Undertaker*, featuring the creepy, undead WWF wrestling star, are unchanged by the new format and will remain ongoings. ■ JM

BOOBS Todd loves to fondle 'em. Oops, sorry–wrong caption.

contestwinners

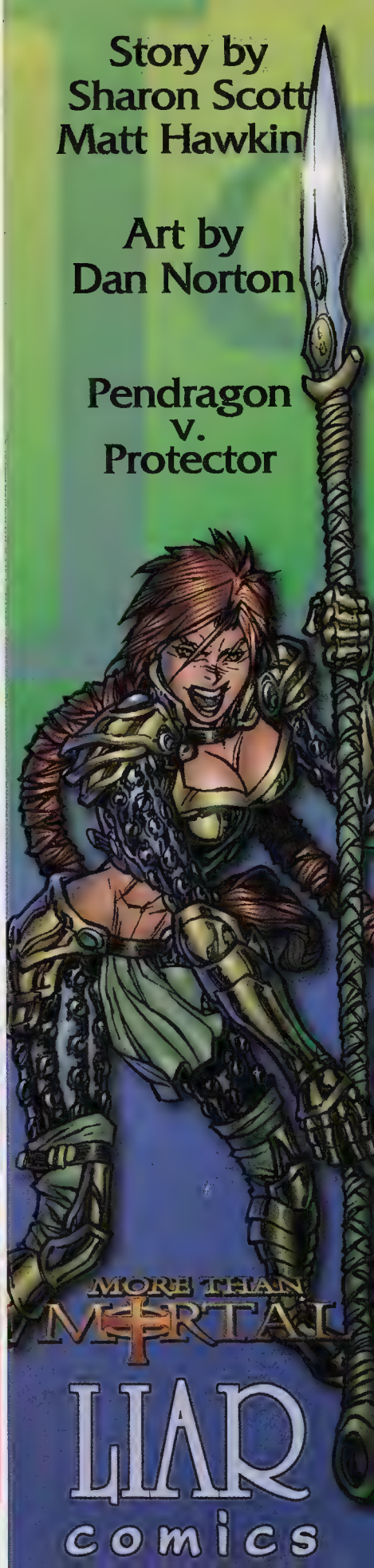
LUCKY STIFFS

- Alex Milne of Brampton, Ontario, Canada proved himself more dangerous than the rest and nailed J. Scott Campbell original art plus every *Danger Girl* variant comic ever as the winner of *Wizard* #89's "*Danger Girl* Variant Cover!" contest!
- Sean Johnson of Warwick, R.I., won two pages of Randy Queen original art and enough Darkchylde loot to give him happy dreams forever in *Wizard* #89's "Darkchylde Trivia!" contest!

Story by
Sharon Scott
Matt Hawkin

Art by
Dan Norton

Pendragon
v.
Protector



a brand-spankin' new *Victorian* story with May's issue #3. The painted cover is by Doug Beekman.

QUANTUM CAT ENTERTAINMENT
It's a flashback special as 1970s star artists Alex Niño and Pablo Marcos return to comics in May's *Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated #1*.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
Cyborg adventure is yours for the taking in *Empty Zone: Trancemissions* #1. Creator Jason Alexander's (no, not the "Seinfeld" actor) May one-shot will lead into an *Empty Zone* ongoing series, due this summer.

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS
Andi Watson (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) returns home to *Skeleton Key* with the launch of a new four-issue mini-series starting in May.

VANGUARD PRODUCTIONS
May sees *The Neal Adams Sketchbook*, a 120-page, hardcover whopper of a testament to the influential *Batman* and *X-Men* artist. It's available for $27.95 unsigned or $35 signed by Adams.

VIZ COMICS
Want to know what those cute little Pokemon (pocket monsters) are saying? Read May's *Pokémon: Pikachu Shocks Back* #3, a special "dubbed" issue that translates the Pokemon's nonsensical speech into English.... Visit Kia Asamiya (*Steam Detectives*) creepy, futuristic Tokyo in the occult/cyberpunk fusion *Silent Möbius: Into The Labyrinth* #1. This six-issue series debuts in May.

WARP GRAPHICS
WaRP has ceased publication of *Elfquest* with February's issue #33, but intends to continue releasing softcover trade paperbacks. New *Elfquest* stories will be printed in these paperbacks.

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Even more stories are available on Wizard World Online! Check these out at:

www.wizardworld.com

Frank Miller returns to Batman–and so does Neal Adams!–in the pages of DC Comics' *Fanboy*....Jim Lee's kitchen (Would we lie to you?) is featured in *Better Homes and Gardens*...The Insane Clown Posse come to Chaos! Comics....Kevin Smith's Bluntman and Chronic make their first comic appearance in *Oni Double Feature*....And a former *Wizard* "Drawing Board" winner gets work on Oktomica Comics' *The Wisp*!

LOBDELL DIVES INTO 'HELLHOLE,' TOP COW

Writer shoots for supernatural cop drama

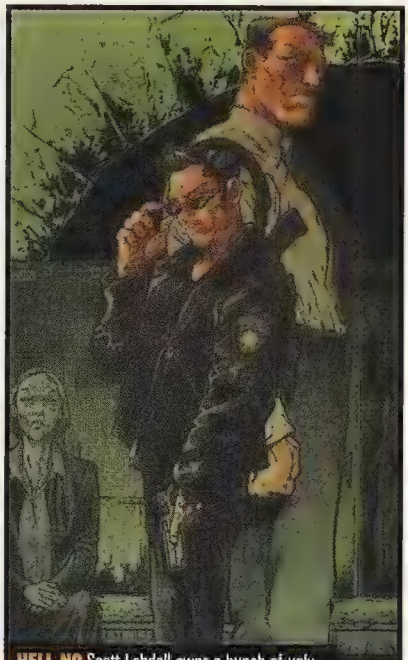
Scott Lobdell is going to Hell. Wanna join him?

Hellhole—Lobdell's creator-owned cop drama with supernatural undertones—rolls into action as two officers, rookie Michael Cabrini and veteran Wilson, are reluctantly partnered to police the pit of despair called Hellhole. The four-issue mini-series, launching in May from Top Cow Productions, teams the former *X-Men* writer with *X-Force* artistic alumni Adam Pollina and Mark Morales.

As Cabrini and Wilson wade through the muck and crime in what could be considered any inner city, they discover Hellhole is more than just a haven for criminals. "What starts out as one crime turns out, upon investigation, to have supernatural roots," Lobdell said, "with implications that threaten the balance between the forces of good and evil so precariously balanced on the precipice we call Earth."

The book's first issue deals with a series of vicious massacres occurring within the walls of a crackhouse—and features what Lobdell lovingly calls "Hellhole-vision." All the book's pages, save for the first, are laid out with three tiers of artwork extending the length of the page. Black borders on top and bottom serve to hold *Hellhole*'s text. The intent, Lobdell said, is to capture the look and feel of a widescreen movie.

Despite the "Hell" prefix, Lobdell promised a heavy dose of reality. "The mystical part takes a back seat to the gritty cop story," he said. "It's kind of the same thing that Jeph Loeb did with an extended murder mystery by using the Batman mythos in *Batman: The Long Halloween*." ■ **GREG ORLANDO**



HELL NO Scott Lobdell owns a bunch of ugly Hawaiian shirts. We hope they won't be in here.

MC2 CHARACTERS MEET MARVEL STAPLES

Time travel? Alternate dimensions? In May, Marvel offers all this up as "next generation" MC2 characters meet mainstays of the Marvel Universe.

"Characters will take spectacular journeys and meet recognizable Marvel characters," Tom DeFalco, writer of the three-book MC2 line said. In *Spider-Girl* #10, teenage Spider-Girl May Parker travels through time and runs into Peter Parker—Spider-Man—while *he's* still in high school. And DeFalco warns readers not to expect May back right away.

In *A-Next* #10, the future Avengers jump dimensions and meet an old Avenger, still alive and hanging out. "They don't end up getting back home, either," DeFalco warned. And *J2* #10 offers Juggernaut Jr. on the road with Wolverine.

What ties these books together? A dose of fun. "The MC2 line has one immature goal," DeFalco says. "We want readers to have a pisser of a time."
■ **TRENT D. McNEELEY**

classicgents

BECAUSE ORDINARY IS BORING

Who said comics ain't literature?

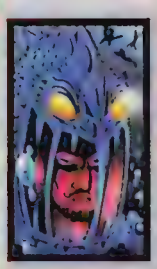
In DC's surprise hit mini-series The *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, writer Alan Moore has created a team of British agents who are actually figures from classic 19th century novels. If you're having trouble figuring out who's who, *Wizard* supplies the English Lit 101 cheat sheet:

CHARACTER: Mina Murray
SOURCE MATERIAL: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*
LITERARY FATE: Mina and a team of vampire hunters kill Dracula.
MOORE'S TAKE: "I needed a strong female character. Mina always struck me as spirited. [Our story] is set one year after *Dracula*, her marriage [to Jonathan Harker] was broken up after the Dracula event, and she's just been sulking around."

CHARACTER: Mr. Hyde
SOURCE MATERIAL: Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
LITERARY FATE: Despondent over his tortured dual existence, the Jekyll-Hyde combo commits suicide.
MOORE'S TAKE: "I've taken the tack that the written accounts on these characters may not have the full facts. Therefore, Hyde faked his death. But after his apparent death, the dark component of Mr. Hyde has grown and the good component of Jekyll has wasted away."

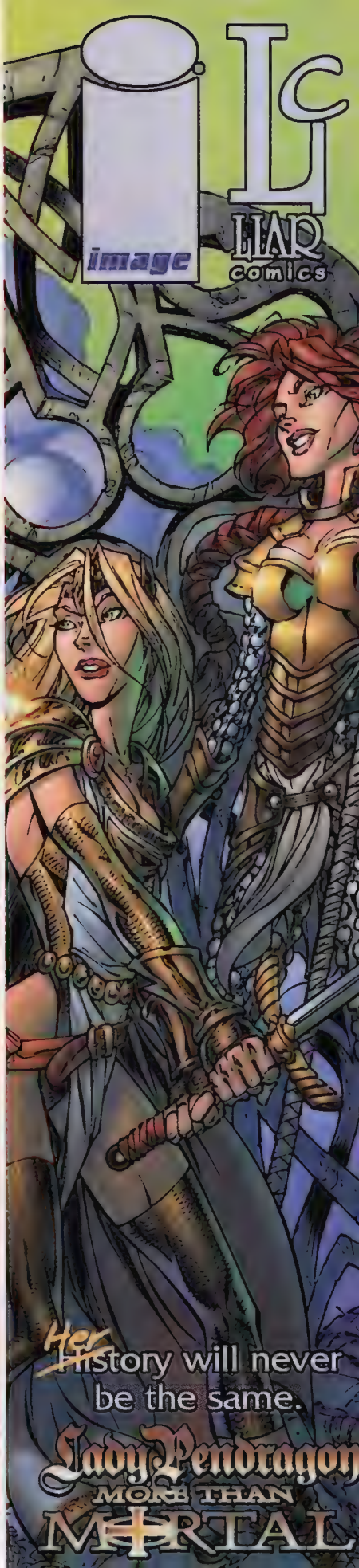
CHARACTER: Hawley Griffin
SOURCE MATERIAL: H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*
LITERARY FATE: Griffin, the Invisible Man, gets beaten to death by an angry mob.
MOORE'S TAKE: "Griffin is one of the most unpleasant characters in literature. He's a right bastard. He's the counter to Hyde. Hyde is brutal, but somehow sympathetic. The Invisible Man is a classic psychopath."

CHARACTER: Alan Quatermain
SOURCE MATERIAL: H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*
LITERARY FATE: The world is notified via a letter that treasure-hunter Quatermain was dead in the sequel *Alan Quatermain*.
MOORE'S TAKE: "He faked his death twice in the original stories, so he's done it again. The idea here was to have a straightforward, swashbuckling, human hero. He stands as the foil and counterpoint to the other far more fantastical heroes in the League."



CHARACTER: Captain Nemo
SOURCE MATERIAL: Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*
LITERARY FATE: At the end of *20,000 Leagues*, Nemo sinks with his submarine, *The Nautilus*.
MOORE'S TAKE: "Most people think Captain Nemo should look like [actor] James Mason in the old Disney movie. But Nemo is an Indian prince. He's angry with the British Empire for what they've done in India, so he turns techno-pirate. He becomes our classic science villain in the group."

CHARACTER: Campion Bond
SOURCE MATERIAL: Uh...none.
LITERARY FATE: Ditto.
MOORE'S TAKE: "All the [classic lit] characters so far are out-of-copyright. But more modern characters we cannot do...directly. Campion Bond is our secret agent, but we didn't want just an anonymous character. So we had some fun with it, and have kind of suggested a *bond* to a similarly named modern forebearer." (Don't get it? Think "007.") ■ JM



LAST MORT STANDING

comic battles you REALLY never thought you'd see

MONSIEUR MALLAH VS. DOUGHBOY

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

6'3"	HEIGHT	10'
345 lbs.	WEIGHT	several tons*
75"	REACH	120"*
Paris, France	HOMETOWN	Weisshorn Mountain, Switzerland
Dr. Zaius	ROLE MODEL	Poppin' Fresh
Jungle musk	SMELL	Baked bread

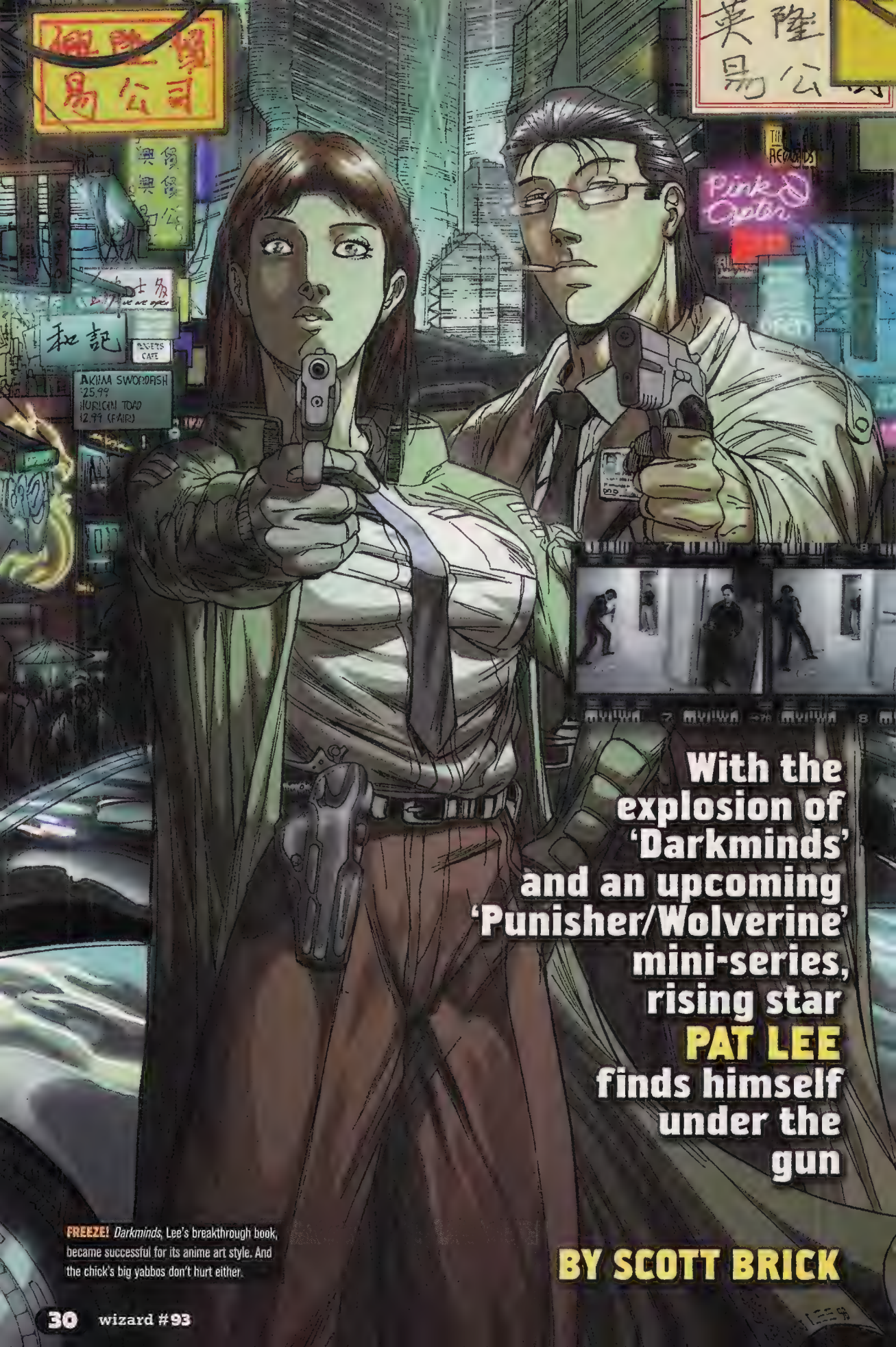
*variable

After a French scientist experimented on a huge gorilla until the ape's IQ reached a genius level of 178, he named the ape Monsieur Mallah and taught him to read, write and speak human languages. The scientist died, but left Mallah instructions on transferring his brain into a computerized receptacle. Together, Monsieur Mallah and the Brain formed the Brotherhood of Evil and set out to conquer the world.

Doughboy is the crowning achievement of the brilliant Swiss biochemist Arnim Zola. Possessing an extremely malleable body, Doughboy can drastically alter his shape, color and even hardness. With virtually no will of his own, Doughboy is a mad scientist's perfect soldier.

tha winnah... On a brisk and cloudy spring night, Monsieur Mallah and the Brain feverishly dredge Devil's Lake in upstate N.Y., in search of a missing neo-plasma cannon, only to stumble upon a mysterious pile of yellow adhesive. Curious, Monsieur Mallah places a minuscule sample in his geneticizer when the menacing pile transforms into the vicious Doughboy! Awakened from his long slumber, the gelatinous foe quickly soars 15 feet up to survey the area. Not seeing his master Zola, Doughboy immediately views the duo as a threat and furiously projects his fists down into Mallah's ferocious visage, knocking the ape into a gnarled oak tree. Grabbing the Brain, Mallah lunges at Doughboy, only to be sucked inside the infernal bioform, who quickly begins hardening, squeezing his malleable hide and crushing the hapless duo. With his primal instincts kicking in, the alarmed simian claws and bites at Doughboy's tacky skin, while the Brain feverishly...ah, screw it. The big monkey pulls out a calculator, a paper clip and a stick of gum, creates a control pad and takes control of the no-willed Pillsbury Poster Child. So while Doughboy loses the battle, he wins the title of mortiest Mort of 'em all by losing to a monkey...a *French* monkey.

this month's battle drawn by LEONARD KIRK AND PETER PALMIOTTI



With the explosion of 'Darkminds' and an upcoming 'Punisher/Wolverine' mini-series, rising star PAT LEE finds himself under the gun

BY SCOTT BRICK

FREEZE! *Darkminds*, Lee's breakthrough book, became successful for its anime art style. And the chick's big yabbos don't hurt either.

Center of Attention

PAT LEE HAS A BATTLE ON HIS HANDS.

No we're not talking about the cutthroat business tactics of the comics industry. Nor are we referring to his latest deadlines. No, what the Canadian penciler is preparing for is war. Horrific, brutal war.

"We've spent over $600 on Nerf weapons," Lee chuckles. "I realize that's just insane, but hey, this is war. We have all-out battles in the hallways of our building in the middle of the night. It's a great way to get rid of stress."

'Stressful' is a fair description of Lee's life these days, but 'insanely busy' would be more accurate. Using the skills he learned from former employers Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld, last year Lee created his own company, Dreamwave Productions, then launched the out-of-nowhere hit mini-series *Darkminds* from Image. Only six months later, he's been tapped to pencil the high-profile Marvel mini-series *Punisher/Wolverine*. As if all that wasn't enough to make his fellow comic pros jealous, Lee is only 23 years old.

"I didn't think I'd be in this type of situation, at least not for awhile," Lee admits, sitting in an office chair in the middle of his sparse Toronto studio. His voice is eager, resonant; he can easily be heard over the *Face Off* soundtrack blaring in the background. Lee smiles while absently fiddling with a box of cigarettes on the tabletop, a box that's never far from him in case he needs to run out for a quick puff. "I didn't think that, at this young age, I'd be taking this big a step. The pressure is tough, which is why you gotta go to war with the Nerf guns, y'know?"

And war he does, along with Dreamwave's 10 employees, made up of family and friends. Nearly every night they shower each other in a hail of little foam bullets. "I've been sniped in the washroom. Someone was standing over the stall with a bow and arrow, waiting for me," Lee laughs. "Boy do your priorities change. 'I was going to take a leak, but now I'm going to kick your ass!' One time I got shot in the ear, and I was deaf for about five minutes. I had to sit there until the ringing was gone." Lee laughs and puffs his chest out with pride. "That was my first Nerf injury."

Lee's perseverance in the face of...ahem...possible disfigurement is nothing compared to the dedication he brings to his job as *Darkminds*' plotter and penciler. Whereas many professionals put in their hours of work then call it a day, the Dreamwave guys literally stay at the studio around the clock to keep their books on schedule. For them, night and day have lost all distinction. Which is why they need to blow off steam.

Owning his own company and working on two popular series represent a huge leap for someone only five years removed from high school. Lee began his rapid rise to fame right after graduating high school, by sending over 150 pages of sample artwork to disinterested Marvel and DC Comics editors. It took nearly a year before he finally caught the attention of then-Image creator Liefeld at a Toronto convention in 1994. Four months later, he was hired by Image and went off to train at Extreme Studios. There, he learned an invaluable skill: speed. "When I was working there, I'd have work slapped down at me," Lee says. "'It's gotta be done today,' I'd hear, and I figured, okay, this is something I've gotta get used to."

PHOTOS BY HENRY HAYES

Vital Stats

NAME: Patrick C.K. Lee (C.K. is the American version of his Chinese name)
OCCUPATION: Comic book artist and plotter; co-owner of Dreamwave Studios
BORN: June 28, 1975, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Toronto, Ontario
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: After filling in on WildStorm's *WildC.A.T.s* and *Wetworks*, Lee handled the artistic reins on Extreme Studio's *Bloodpool*. He recently helped found Dreamwave Productions, and rose to fame on the out-of-nowhere sensation *Darkminds* for Image Comics. His first Marvel work will be on April's *Punisher/Wolverine* mini-series.
FAVORITE THING YOU CAN ONLY GET NORTH OF THE BORDER: "A hot French chick."

Lee soon found himself working on such Extreme books as *Prophet* and *Bloodpool*, as well as freelancing for WildStorm Productions on *WildC.A.T.s*, *Wetworks* and *Wynonna Earp*, adapting his style to fit each particular book. Finally, at the suggestion of his good friend (and Dreamwave's Editor-in-Chief) Erik Ko, Lee stumbled upon his own signature style. "Erik came to me and said, 'Pat, you've got to do Japanese anime style but publish it in American comics, and if you don't, somebody else is going to be the first one to do it and you're going to regret it,'" Lee says. It was while experimenting with his new anime style that Lee came up with *Darkminds*. This noir-ish crime thriller with a heavy dose of science fiction stars two 21st-century detectives on the hunt for a serial killer in the fictional city of Macropolis. Think "Blade Runner" meets "Akira." (See sidebar on page 34 for more details.) "My style is very Japanese oriented, and it really came about through *Darkminds*," Lee says. "Even though a lot of anime winds up looking cartoony, I try to bring as much realism as I can get to the series."

Far from being cartoony, *Darkminds* is at times brutally realistic. Exploding eyeballs, messages carved into human torsos and bullet-riddled corpses are the typical fare, but Lee also injects a lighter tone at times. "I've hidden photos of me and my brother on billboards," Lee says. "I put in a 'Gaiman Bakery' for Neil Gaiman, I did a *Battle Angel Alita* reference for one of our covers. Basically, I'm doing an homage to things I love."

Looking around Lee's studio, it's easy to see all the good fortune *Darkminds* has brought him. "Thank God for Erik's suggestion," he laughs. "If it wasn't for him, I don't know where I'd be today."

Where Lee finds himself today is in the conference room of a five-room studio in suburban Toronto; so far, it's the only room (besides the offices) that has any furniture. Lee promises that before too long there'll be pictures on the wall, light fixtures on the ceiling and Dreamwave's logo painted near the entrance. But for now it's all empty space.

"We've got so much work to do, who has time to decorate the place?" Lee says. "I actually just bought this chair only a week ago." He leans back, reveling in its comfort and the smell of new leather. "Back when I was freelancing, I couldn't afford to buy leather chairs. We just surrounded our table with some cheap, sad-looking stools." Lee spreads his arms, taking in the grandeur of six brand-new leather chairs. "Now, finally, we've arrived."

At 23, Lee's a seasoned professional, having worked in the comic trenches for over four years. That's a big jump from Image fill-in artist to promising young star at Marvel. And he did it all with a little help from his friends.

Ko brought Lee's work to the attention of the editor-in-chief's longtime friends Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. "At first I kind of rolled my eyes, because I'd seen so much of this American manga stuff," Quesada says of his initial reaction to *Darkminds*. "But Pat's stuff wasn't an Americanized version of manga, this was really traditional and had such a great science fiction feel. Since I figured he'd probably grown up on Wolverine and Punisher, we sort of tailor-made this project for him."

The project, shipping in April, sees the two Marvel heroes take on an evil presence unleashed beneath the streets of New York City. For Lee, it was a dream come true. "When I was young, all I did was draw Wolverine," he says. "I'd put a 'Snikt!' on everything. When Erik told me they were interested in doing *Punisher/Wolverine*, I jumped up and said, 'Let's do it! I'm busy, but I'll fit it in!'

Now, Lee faces the daunting task of keeping two monthly books on schedule. "Tonight, I have to do the layouts for *Darkminds* #8, and I have to pencil a page or two. Plus, I have to do at least a page on *Punisher/Wolverine*, and on top of all that, I have to finish editing *Darkminds* #7 with my brother." Lee sighs and shakes his head. "Thank God I just woke up."

Just woke up? The clock on the wall says it's nearly midnight. Lee just shrugs, acknowledging that crazy hours come with the territory. He also knows it'll get worse before it gets better; after *Darkminds* ends with issue #8 and *Punisher/Wolverine* runs its four-issue course, Lee and his Dreamwave mates will publish three new

SAY 'AHHHH' Wanna see Marvel heroes, anime-style? Check out Lee's upcoming *Punisher/Wolverine* mini-series.

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Curt Schaffenburger
Steve Siegal
Andy Smith
Dave Stevens
Jill Thompson
Tim Townsend
Matt Wagner
Mark Waid
Mike Wieringo
Chuck Wojtkiewicz
Chance Wolf

Actors
Bill Hinzman
Night Of The Living Dead
Kane Hoder
Jason from *Friday The 13th*
Robert Krimmer
Babylon 5 and *One Life to Live*
John Russo
Creator of *Night of The Living Dead*
Tom Savini
Special Effects master, *Dusk Til Dawn*
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Dr. Smith from *Lost In Space*
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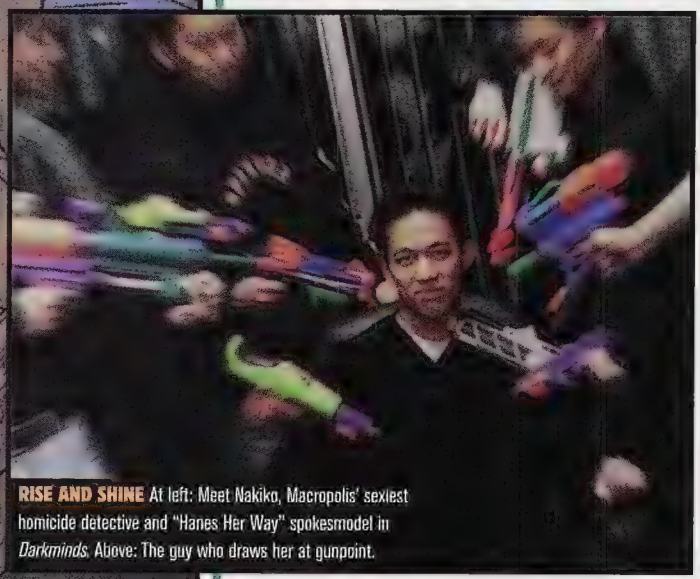

RISE AND SHINE At left: Meet Nakiko, Macropolis' sexiest homicide detective and "Hanes Her Way" spokesmodel in *Darkminds*. Above: The guy who draws her at gunpoint.

series from Image. He'll be co-plotting *Neon Cyber*, an eight-issue spinoff from *Darkminds*, focusing on the Neon Dragon motorcycle gang from the aforementioned title; drawing and co-plotting a currently unnamed fantasy series set for a 12-issue run; and then penciling and co-plotting a sequel to *Darkminds*.

That's the plan at least, but the comics industry's been known to throw the occasional curveball. There's always the chance that Marvel or DC could approach Lee and offer him his dream job. What if he could take over *X-Men* or *Batman*? "It'd be hard, but I think I'd still stick with what I'm doing for Image," Lee says. "That's where you wish there were two of you," he laughs. "I think you've just got to stick to your dreams, and doing these next three series is mine."

Where those dreams will take him is anyone's guess. But according to Quesada, there's no limitations to where Lee could go. "In our stable right now, I think we've got one of the hottest rising stars in Pat Lee," he says.

As for where Lee sees his dreams taking him, he isn't exactly sure, but feels fairly certain he'll be in comics at least until he's 40. "I imagine I'd probably quit about then to spend time with my family, making it up to my wife for all the time I missed with her and the kids," he laughs. "Of course, finding the dream woman somewhere between now and then is part of the plan as well, not to mention making a million dollars or two."

Beyond those lofty goals, Lee's unsure of what his future holds. He does admit, however, that he'll always remember where he came from.

"I'm not really sure what I'd do at that point," Lee muses with a sudden smile, "but whatever it is, I'm sure I'll make time for Nerf wars."

California-based freelancer Scott Brick once got felt up in a KFC drive-through, while wearing a blouse and a brooch. Don't ask.

'Darkminds' for Dummies

WHAT? *Darkminds*, an eight-issue mini-series by plotter/artist Pat Lee and writer Alvin Lee, released through Image Comics

WHERE? Macropolis, a fictional Asian city; over seven million people packed into massive buildings towering five miles above ground

WHEN? 2032

WHO? Nagawa and Nakiko, two homicide detectives for Macropolis' Special Investigations Unit (SIU), are hard on the trail of a serial killer. Nagawa's a traditional sort of gumshoe, while Nakiko's a cyborg with psionic enhancement, specializing in the ability to draw information from dead brain tissue. Together they hunt Paradox, a killer with the nasty habit of carving messages into his victims.

Nakiko discovers a former life she knew nothing about. She was apparently once known as Reiko, a member of the Neon Dragons motorcycle gang who supposedly died in an auto accident shortly before Nakiko emerged as a cyborg. It's conceivable that Nakiko's entire history could be nothing but implanted memories.

WHY? Not much is known of Paradox's motive, but Nagawa believes he's an artist who wants his work to be seen and appreciated. He may also have ties to the two megacorporations Aurora Industries and Atlas Technologies, competitors for defense department contracts.

HOW? Pinpointing the sites of Paradox's murder scenes on a map of Macropolis, Nagawa and Nakiko find a digital replica of a human face. By running the face through SIU's database of Macropolis' citizens, they find and arrest a man they believe is the Paradox killer, but soon after, the suspect is killed in custody. When a dead body promptly shows up in Nagawa's refrigerator, it becomes obvious that Paradox is framing our hero... SB

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WITH DISTURBING TWISTS ON MARVEL HEROES, 'MUTANT X' TURNS THE MARVEL UNIVERSE INSIDE OUT

BY RUSSELL LISSAU
WITH THE WIZARD STAFF

JUST CALL *MUTANT X* THE MARVEL UNIVERSE ON CRACK.

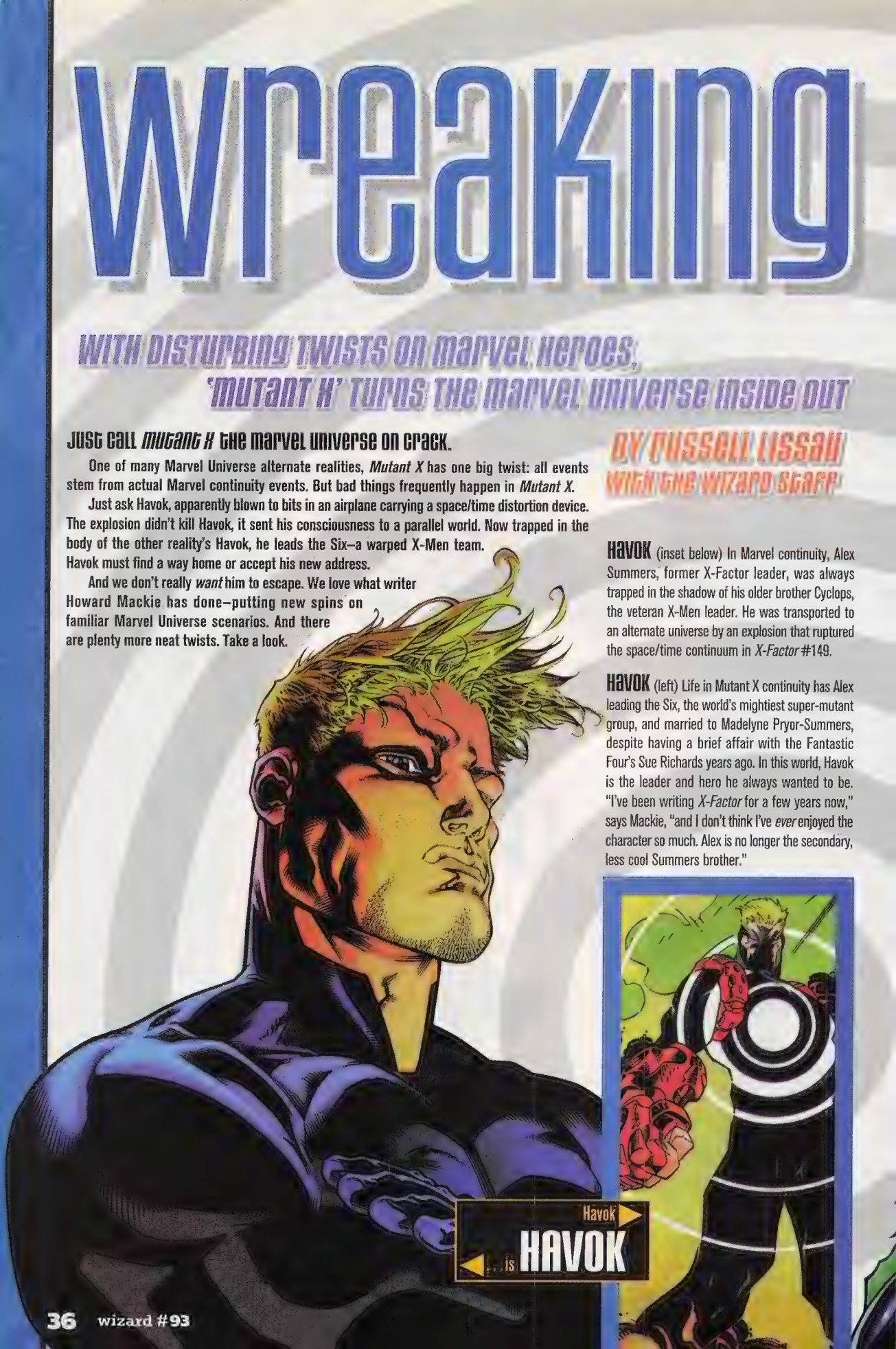
One of many Marvel Universe alternate realities, *Mutant X* has one big twist: all events stem from actual Marvel continuity events. But bad things frequently happen in *Mutant X*.

Just ask Havok, apparently blown to bits in an airplane carrying a space/time distortion device. The explosion didn't kill Havok, it sent his consciousness to a parallel world. Now trapped in the body of the other reality's Havok, he leads the Six–a warped X-Men team. Havok must find a way home or accept his new address.

And we don't really *want* him to escape. We love what writer Howard Mackie has done–putting new spins on familiar Marvel Universe scenarios. And there are plenty more neat twists. Take a look.

HAVOK (inset below) In Marvel continuity, Alex Summers, former X-Factor leader, was always trapped in the shadow of his older brother Cyclops, the veteran X-Men leader. He was transported to an alternate universe by an explosion that ruptured the space/time continuum in *X-Factor* #149.

HAVOK (left) Life in Mutant X continuity has Alex leading the Six, the world's mightiest super-mutant group, and married to Madelyne Pryor-Summers, despite having a brief affair with the Fantastic Four's Sue Richards years ago. In this world, Havok is the leader and hero he always wanted to be. "I've been writing *X-Factor* for a few years now," says Mackie, "and I don't think I've *ever* enjoyed the character so much. Alex is no longer the secondary, less cool Summers brother."



HAVOK

STORM (inset right) Dracula's bite almost turned her into a vampire, but this weather controlling X-woman recovered. (*Uncanny X-Men* #159 and *Uncanny X-Men Annual* #6.)

BLOODSTORM (far right) Another Six member, she has been transformed into a full-fledged vampire, with amplified vampiric powers such as her hypnotic gaze and ability to become mist. Bloodstorm's attendant is Kitty, and Forge is her personal blood bank.

"If I have *any* regrets about this being a team book," Mackie says, "it would be that I don't get to focus on the individuals as much as I'd like to. There is so much backstory playing through my head which involves Bloodstorm that I'd love to get a chance to devote a few issues to her."

THE BEAST (inset left) A brilliant scientist and scholar, Dr. Henry McCoy turned gray and furry, then blue, during a genetics lab experiment gone wrong in *Amazing Adventures* #11.

THE BRUTE (far left) The genetic experiment instead caused McCoy to turn green and scaly, and he lost his vast intellect. As a member of the Six, he was recently framed and executed for a murder he didn't commit and subsequently resurrected by the Goblin Queen.

"For me, Hank McCoy has become the heart and soul of the book," Mackie says. He's "a truly tragic character who hopefully touches the readers as much as he touches me."

ALTERED STATES

The members of the Six aren't the only Marvel characters who are different in the Mutant X world. Everyone from Alpha Flight to Magneto has been affected. Take a look:

S.H.I.E.L.D.

MARVEL CONTINUITY: The Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage Logistics Directorate protects U.S. citizens throughout the world.

MUTANT X CONTINUITY: The Saviors of Humanity by Intervention in the Evolution of Life-form Deviants plot mutantkind's extinction.

GWEN STACY

MARVEL: Peter Parker's ex-girlfriend died during a fateful battle between Spider-Man and the Green Goblin (*Amazing Spider-Man* #121).

MUTANT X: Alive, Gwen is working as a TV news reporter.

MAGNETO

MARVEL: The Master of Magnetism briefly took over as X-Men team leader when Professor X took ill (*Uncanny X-Men* #200). He has since returned to his villainous ways.

MUTANT X: Magneto never gave up the reins as X-Men team leader, causing a rift between teammates.

ALPHA FLIGHT

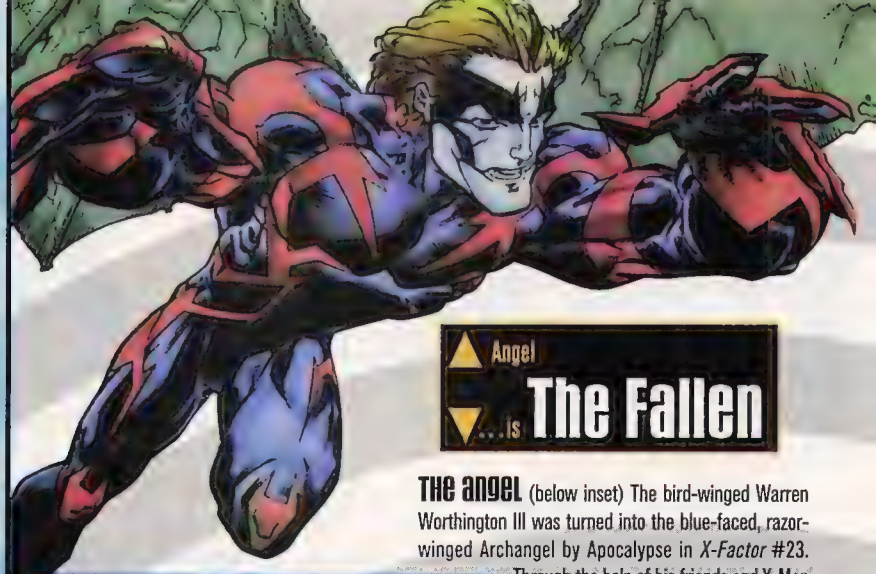
MARVEL: They're Canada's greatest champions, allies of other American heroes.

MUTANT X: Canada and America are enemies; Alpha Flight defends against outside aggressors.

REED RICHARDS

MARVEL: Super-genius leader of the Fantastic Four who gained stretchy powers after being exposed to cosmic rays.

MUTANT X: Super-EVIL-genius leader of the Fantastic Four who never gained superpowers, but wears a high-tech battle suit of his own design. He recently betrayed the FF in a quest for more power. ■RL



Angel ...is **The Fallen**

THE ANGEL (below inset) The bird-winged Warren Worthington III was turned into the blue-faced, razor-winged Archangel by Apocalypse in *X-Factor* #23. Through the help of his friends and X-Men teammates, he's slowly regained most of his humanity–and feathered wings. (Although he's still blue.)

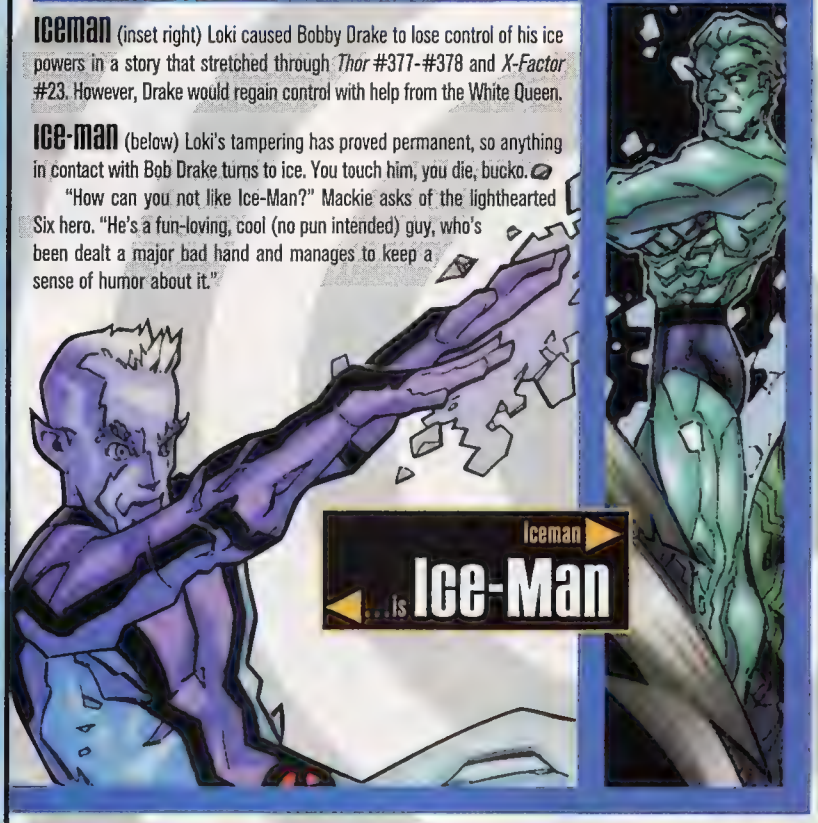
THE FALLEN (above) This enigmatic Six member never fully recovered from his transformation to Archangel and has leathery bat wings instead of metal ones. He's creepy, breathes fire and conspires with the Goblin Queen.

"He, not Madelyne, is evil personified," Mackie says. "He is the one character in whom I can find *no* redeeming values. He's cruel, nasty and dangerous, and is soon to play a *major* role in the direction the book takes."

ICEMAN (inset right) Loki caused Bobby Drake to lose control of his ice powers in a story that stretched through *Thor* #377-#378 and *X-Factor* #23. However, Drake would regain control with help from the White Queen.

ICE-MAN (below) Loki's tampering has proved permanent, so anything in contact with Bob Drake turns to ice. You touch him, you die, bucko.

"How can you not like Ice-Man?" Mackie asks of the lighthearted Six hero. "He's a fun-loving, cool (no pun intended) guy, who's been dealt a major bad hand and manages to keep a sense of humor about it."



Iceman ...is **Ice-Man**

Spider-Man

...is Man-Spider

SPIDER-MAN A bite from Morbius the vampire gave Spidey four extra arms in *Amazing Spider-Man* #101. He would soon return to normal.

MAN-SPIDER (right) Peter Parker never shook the extra limbs and tailored his costume to cover 'em. He's even been cloned, and it was his clone that was killed by Maddy Pryor-Summers and the Fallen.

"You think [the 'Clone Saga'] ruined the Spider-Man books?" asks Mackie, a key writer of the controversial story. "You wish the whole story never happened? TOUGH! We've got a million more clones coming right at you! The clones are here to stay! Hey, if you can't make fun of yourself...get out of the business!"

MADELYNE PRYOR Cyclops' ex-wife, who happened to be a clone of Jean Grey, became the evil Goblin Queen in *Uncanny X-Men* #239 after Mr. Sinister stole her infant son. Pryor died shortly afterward but recently was resurrected in *X-Man* #1.

MARVEL WOMAN (left) A telekinetic, she is Havok's wife, the mother of his son and co-leader of the Six. Since her Goblin Queen persona resurfaced, however, she's one bad mama bent on world domination.

"She's the one that stirs *everything* up," says Mackie. The passions which drive her actions as a wife, mother, friend and occasionally all-around bad girl ensure that she can never be a cardboard cutout."

Madelyne Pryor is...

Marvel Woman

Wolverine is

Logan

WOLVERINE (inset right) This scrappy X-Man lost his adamantium skeleton in *X-Men* #25 and overcame the animalistic regression that followed.

LOGAN (lower right) He's a man-beast with adamantium claws. He, Sabretooth and Wildchild make up the Pack, a group of feral Canadian operatives. "I have some regrets regarding the story which featured Logan and the Pack," Mackie says. "I've been wondering if it was a mistake to utilize such an early point of continuity as a divergence point, BUT...then I remembered that the story ain't over yet! Look for Logan–pursued by Creed, Wildchild and Alpha Flight–to return real soon."

Chicago-based writer Russell Lissau lost his luggage the last time he visited a parallel universe. He's still waiting to get it back.

MORTS OF 'MUTANT X'

Yeah, it's neat seeing how some of Marvel's cooler characters are twisted in Mutant X's alternate reality. But we wanna know where the lame-ass characters are! Writer Howard Mackie clues us in on their whereabouts, but laughs, "I reserve the right to change my mind on ANY of these as future continuity develops."

D-MAN "Surviving a steroid scandal and the 'Secrets of Superpowered Wrestlers Revealed' TV special, D-Man went on to unite ALL professional wrestling belts under one title. He then retired and was appointed ambassador to Guam by President Starr. Currently, he is being considered for the Republican vice presidential nomination on a ticket with Dan Quayle."

THE VANISHER "When last seen, he and the Spot were performing in late-night infomercials promoting their own line of stain removers. Rumor has it they are much more successful in this endeavor than in any of a criminal nature."

ARCADE "Unfortunately, he was involved in a freak accident in one of his first encounters with the X-Men. Between Banshee's sonic blast and an errant bolt of lightning thrown by Storm, he lost all hearing, sight and ability to speak, but...he still plays a mean pinball."

THE SLUG "Joined the Wilson Fisk Weight Control Diet Plan and quickly got out of the supervillain business."

CAPTAIN ULTRA "Promoted himself to Colonel Ultra, moved to Kentucky and opened a supervillain franchise which utilizes witches who specialize in espionage."

THE OWL "Who? Couldn't help myself...sorry. Actually, the Owl, the Vulture, the Falcon, Deathbird, Red Raven and the Battling Bantam have formed a new superhero group called the Poultry Patrol. Their major nemesis...Colonel Ultra's Kentucky Spied Wiccan. (Whoo! That was a long way to go for that one!)"

ANGAR THE SCREAMER "The '60s faded away, and so did his radical tendencies. After a series of failed business attempts, Angar was able to pick himself up by his bootstraps and turn his life around. He is now doing the motivational speaker circuit as Angar the Self-Actualizer."

GILGAMESH THE FORGOTTEN ONE "I can't recall."

DEVIL DINOSAUR "Kraven's last hunt. 'Nuff said, true believer."

THE SCARLET SPIDER "IS the real Spider-Man. The publication of the 'Clone Saga' and all its revelations launched the Platinum Age of comic books. Spider-Man sales quadrupled and the writers went to work with one of the top directors in Hollywood to finally oversee the production of a major motion picture, which won an Academy Award." ■RL

BATMA
BIG 1

With 'Batman Beyond' and 'No Man's Land' cranking Bat-mania into high gear, *Wizard* tackles the 10 toughest Bat-questions

By Scott Brick and the *Wizard* Staff

DUST OFF THAT BAT-POLE, 'CAUSE BATMAN'S BACK.

His new cartoon "Batman Beyond" has exploded since its January debut, breaking a ratings record for the WB network. His new comic storyline "No Man's Land" has blown out of comic stores. And there's reportedly plans in the works for a Broadway musical.

Yep, Batman sure is primed for the year 2000.

He's so hot that we can't wait to see what happens to him next. And rather than wait, we decided to take matters into our own hands by asking the questions every fanboy wants to know. *What about another Bat-flick? How is "No Man's Land" gonna end? Is Aunt Harriet REALLY a sexual dynamo?*

***Wizard* gets to the bottom of everything Batman. And if the guilty parties can't give answers, then we give our own spin. Except for that Aunt Harriet question. Remind us to tell you about it sometime.**

Will there be a 'Batman 5' movie?

THEIR TAKE: Without a doubt, the Batman franchise means big bucks for Warner Bros. Even though "Batman and Robin" tripped at the box office and made most fans cry for the head of director Joel Schumacher, Warner Bros. has still earned over $700 million with the Dark Knight Movie Machine.

"I can safely say there will be a 'Batman 5,' but you won't see it before 2001," Warner Bros. publicist Jeff Walker says. "I think we'll see 'Superman' before we see 'Batman 5.'"

As for who's going to wear the cape and who'll be directing, nobody knows for sure. "All bets are off as to who will play Batman and who will direct," Walker says. "Whether [most-recent Batman actor] George Clooney will be back, who knows? Everything's being rethought at the moment."

Schumacher wants in. He's said in interviews he'd like to do a Bat-flick with a complete unknown actor cast as a rookie Dark Knight. "I like the idea of [writer] Frank Miller's 'Batman: Year One,'" the director says. "In it, Bruce Wayne is 20 and he's becoming Batman," the director says in published reports. "Alfred is only 40 and commissioner Gordon is 30 and just married."

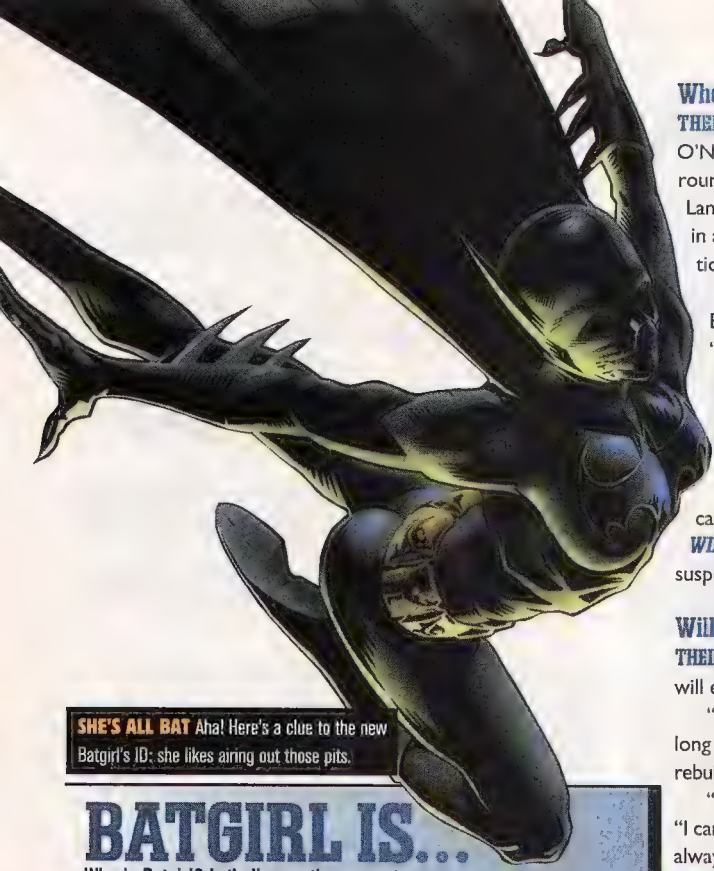
Two other persistent Internet rumors have the fifth flick modeled after *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* or a "World's Finest" movie that would feature both Batman and Superman. Warner's official response? "Absolutely no way," Walker laughs. "It's all just rumors, folks."

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** Batman's a proven cash cow, no doubt about it. But Warner had better rethink its take on the character before making another disaster flick. And we're not talking "Titanic."

The studio must make him more of the Dark Knight of the 1989 Bat-flick than the Cornball Crusader from "Batman and Robin." Batman has to return to his obsessive, vigilante roots with a worthy villain to spar with (Joker anyone?).

A "Batman: Year One" movie sounds great, but sorry Schumacher—you had your chance. Apology not accepted.

BATMAN AND GARY COLEMAN PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION



SHE'S ALL BAT Aha! Here's a clue to the new Batgirl's ID: she likes airing out those pits.

BATGIRL IS...

Who is Batgirl? Let's line up the suspects...

DET. RENEE MONTOYA

This tough-as-nails Gotham City police detective has the no-nonsense fighting skills and street-smart know-how to be a Batgirl. Plus, we bet she'd look great in black leather. ODDS: 2-1

LT. SARAH ESSEN-GORDON

So what if she's in her 40s? This chick's in shape! And since she's a Gotham City cop, she can not only handle herself on the street, but she knew Gotham and her husband (police chief Gordon) needed a Batman when the Dark Knight went AWOL. So she became one. ODDS: 4-1

HUNTRESS

What better way to prove to Batman that she can play things by the book, like she's been trying to do? Ever wonder why Batgirl's mask covers her entire face? Maybe she has more to hide. ODDS: 5-1

ORACLE

She used to be Batgirl. That is, until she was paralyzed by the Joker. She's a tech whiz, so it's not too far-fetched in this comic book world that she could obtain high-tech prosthetic legs to pick up where she left off. ODDS: 7-1

CATWOMAN

A stretch, yeah—but not if her motives are to get into the Dark Knight's Bat-tights. And this *femme fatale* has proven she'll do anything to get what she wants. ODDS: 10-1

GARY COLEMAN

Tired of seeing his former "Diff'rent Strokes" co-stars rot in jail or rehab, this former child star decided to move to Gotham to make sure this never happened to anyone ever again. That, and to scam money for that Dana Plato video. ODDS: 100,000-1

Who is this new Batgirl?

THEIR TAKE: "We're not saying," Batman Group Editor Denny O'Neil says flatly. And with good reason. So far, the mystery surrounding Gotham's newest nocturnal protector in the "No Man's Land" comic storyline—starring a Bat-cast trying to maintain order in an earthquake-ravaged Gotham City—has ignited fan speculation, so why should DC ruin a good thing?

"[Batgirl] is someone who is well established in Batman lore," Batman Editor Jordan Gorfinkel says. "This is not going to be a 'Mask comes off, who the heck is that?!' kind of story."

Look for Batgirl's tale to take an important turn in May's "Claim Jumping," a two-part story in *Legends of the Dark Knight* #119 and *Shadow of the Bat* #87, before the unmasking officially takes place in June's *Legends of the Dark Knight* #120. And the mystery doesn't stop there. Sources inside DC indicate after the unmasking, someone new will wear the suit.

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** We got it covered. See sidebar at left for our suspect lineup.

Will Gotham City be rebuilt?

THEIR TAKE: There will be reconstruction, but as to whether Gotham will ever return to its pre-earthquake glory, it's too early to tell.

"We don't want to give away our story," O'Neil says of the year-long "No Man's Land" saga. "We can say that Gotham City will be rebuilt in such a way as to acknowledge the quake and its aftermath."

"Based on discussions we've had so far at DC," Gorfinkel says, "I can assure you that what will follow will incorporate what you've always loved best about Batman and Gotham City."

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** Since Gotham City is itself almost a character in Batman comics, it will most likely be rebuilt. After a year of not having comics' most famous fictional city around, it sure will be nice to see Bats in a "normal" setting. And it'll beat fighting crime in, say, Cleveland.

How will the animated smash 'Batman Beyond' affect regular DC continuity?

THEIR TAKE: Not at all. For the moment.

"We have no plans to incorporate any 'Batman Beyond' stuff into our books," O'Neil says of WB's futuristic new Bat-cartoon. "But as time creeps on, who knows?"

"Batman Beyond" has been a monster hit for Warner Bros., and its debut recorded the highest-ever rating for any WB show in the Sunday night time slot. Given that "Batman: The Animated Series"—a hit in its own right—has had its share of influence over the ongoing Batman books (villains Harley Quinn, Lock-Up and the current Mr. Freeze), "Batman Beyond" certainly has the chance to affect some major change.

Much of the success of "Beyond" stems from a teenager (Terry McGinnis) wearing the Bat-suit with an 80-year-old Bruce Wayne training him. Would DC consider injecting Bat-youth into the comics? "I think it's possible for Bruce to be replaced," O'Neil says. "But I can't see it happening. We replaced him with Dick Grayson [a.k.a. Nightwing] in the 'Prodigal' storyline [in 1994], but I don't think we can replace him."

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** Bruce Wayne IS Batman. His origin is the stuff of legends. That said, no one's taking the mantle away from Wayne anytime soon and whether McGinnis can carry that name for the long haul remains to be seen.

Will Batman get a new costume?

THEIR TAKE: "We really don't know yet," O'Neil says of this hot Internet rumor. "All it would take is an artist coming up with a better idea. We've done it before. [But] we won't have to deal with questions like that for a few months yet."

Of all the buzz surrounding the climax of "No Man's Land," the

most persistent has been that Batman might emerge in a new, improved costume. The Bat-suit last got tweaked in 1995, when the costume became a much darker blue and gray.

O'Neil's said numerous times that bold, daring steps are part of the job of editing superhero icons, however. A new costume would certainly fit that bill.

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** Batman has one of the greatest looks in comics. Why mess with it? If anything new comes outta "No Man's Land," we hope Bats keeps the multi-pouch utility belt. It makes Batman look like a major bad-ass, and how else is he gonna carry around his Batarangs, Bat-Shark-Repellent and Gas-X?

Will there be any new Bat-titles after 'No Man's Land'?

THEIR TAKE: "Way too early to say," O'Neil says, who claims it's just too far from the ending of "NML" to predict its aftermath. But the possibility for a new book remains strong.

Gorfinkel hints at the possibilities. "If Batgirl and Harley Quinn take off in popularity, there is always the chance that they will star in either their own mini-series or ongoing title," he says. "I know that ['Batman' animated producer] Paul Dini, Harley's creator, would love nothing more than to see a *Harley* ongoing series. But there are no official plans on the boards at this time. Bottom line: if you want a character's series published, support it at the checkout counter."

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** Count on it. Based on the sizzle of "No Man's Land," at least one new Bat-title can be guaranteed and it's got girl power written all over it. Batgirl power, that is.

Fans have been demanding one for years and now they can pretty much reserve their January 2000 copy of *Batgirl* #1 because this Bat-babe with a killer leg-kick is the real deal.

Why isn't the JLA saving Gotham?

THEIR TAKE: "Answers are forthcoming in [April's] *Batman* #566 and [August's] *JLA* #34," Gorfinkel says, adding "and [the reasons] are logical."

Even though it's a critical and financial success, "No Man's Land" is the stuff from which headaches are made. After all, if a major metropolitan city such as Gotham City gets devastated by an earthquake, Batman's Justice League buds'd lend a helping hand. (Some friends. They didn't.) And Gothamites such as Batman and The Huntress couldn't possibly be JLAers while their home turf's like an "Escape From New York" set. (They still are.)

Before you grab some Advil, any explanation DC offers is going to leave someone dissatisfied, but at least it's determined to address the situation.

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** What they said. But it better be good. (No pressure or anything, fellas.)

Who will be the regular Batman creative team in the year 2000?

THEIR TAKE: "Too early to say," O'Neil says. "Not only have we not made assignments, we haven't talked to creative folk." But don't be too surprised if one name lands in the credit box.

Jim Lee.

"I'm actually drawing a *Batman: No Man's Land Gallery* cover right now," Lee, an admitted Bat-fan and DC's most powerful creative weapon, says. But pressed for more, Lee laughs, "Okay, I've got my Magic 8-ball here, and I'm shaking it up. 'Better Not Tell You Now.'

BEYOND WORDS See, "Batman Beyond" can be a smash hit cartoon, even if the new Batman fights a human lava lamp.

He was one of the greatest heroes of all...

A shining champion of truth and justice...

And while the legacy lives on with another, his legend remains...

DARKER KNIGHTS

One lives in the darkness. The other *is* the Darkness.

This summer, DC's Dark Knight Detective pits himself against Top Cow's supernatural assassin in *Batman/Darkness*, a 48-page prestige format one-shot.

Written by Jeph Loeb and Scott Lobdell, *Batman/Darkness* features artwork by Marc Silvestri and David Finch. "Being able to work with them was a huge selling point for me," Loeb says. "I've seen some of the preliminary drawings, and they're everything you want them to be."

The action begins as *The Darkness'* Jackie Estacado and his uncle, New York mob boss Don Franchetti, relocate to absorb some of Gotham City's underworld 'business.' Meanwhile, Batman investigates a series of brutal gangland murders that have a definite supernatural flavor, murders that coincide with The Darkness' appearance in Gotham.

Righteous superhero against supernatural hitman? It sounds like a recipe for destruction.

"They're on a collision course," Loeb laughs. "In team-ups, what the fans really want to see is the two characters go at each other rather than finding a way to work together. I mean, where's the fun in that?"

Finding a neutral territory for Batman and The Darkness to hash out their problems was never an option for Loeb, who strongly believes that Batman stories set outside Gotham City are nearly impossible to tell. "Batman is as much a creature of Gotham as he is of the night," he says. "So Jackie's coming to Gotham City from New York. On the basis of that, they're going to collide, because at the end of the day, Jackie is a mob hitman and Batman is a much more righteous sort of fellow. It should be pretty memorable." ■ SB

There, that's a good answer." Actually, it's not, Jim—but we'll let it slide if you get the gig.

Readers are hoping writer Bob Gale plops into that dream credit box next to Lee's. Given his wildly successful tenure on "NML"'s opening story arc, "No Law and a New Order," the man responsible for all three *Back To The Future* films would fit like a Bat-glove.

"I think and hope that Bob will continue to be a resource for us," O'Neil says, "but it is not likely that he'll do a regular monthly book." Gale's next contribution to "No Man's Land" will come in *Detective Comics* #733 in April.

As for other talent, many writers and artists new to Batman—such as crime novelist Greg Rucka and *Crow* artist Alex Maleev—will be introduced in "No Man's Land." "All are contenders for the 'throne,'" Gorfinkel maintains. "And there are no plans to cancel any Batman titles. They're all flourishing during 'No Man's Land.'"

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** We keep hearing Lee and his *Divine Right* writer Scott Lobdell are in the pole position to drive the Batmobile come 2000. Given his take on the Dark Knight in a couple pinups and covers, Lee would be a phenomenal coup for the Bat-office; the jury's still out on Lobdell's take (see Batman/Darkness sidebar above). Our pick for Bat-scribe would be Gale—he's not only proven he can write a great Bat-yarn, but also a great story *without* much of Batman in it.

What's the big payoff to 'No Man's Land'?

THEIR TAKE: Everything's up for grabs. Some characters may live while others may die. New characters could get their own monthly (see separate item on page 43). Bat-Mite might turn up and undo an entire year's worth of stories with a snap of his fingers. (Note to DC: We're just joking with that last bit. Really.)

"Everyone will be stunned by the revelations in store for them," Gorfinkel says. "Clues to the payoffs are being planted right now, from the inception. People who have been reading from the beginning will receive a very special, 'Holy cow! They must have planned that from the *beginning*!' epiphany when they get to the end."

As for how the character will evolve, Gorfinkel claims that, as the result of "No Man's Land," Batman will be more at peace with himself and his place in Gotham City, not to mention his place within the superhero pantheon. "In essence, he will feel more comfortable coming out from the shadows," Gorfinkel says. "Although not too much—he'll still be a Dark Knight, not a Caped Crusader."

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** The big payoff of "No Man's Land" is simply a great Batman story (we hope). Since no one's ever attempted this type of radical story of epic scope, the punchline is simply doing it and doing it *well*. So far, so good.

'Batman: The Musical'—are they serious?

THEIR TAKE: God help us, apparently so.

TA-DAAA! "Batman: The Musical"? You betcha.

Published reports in the New York *Daily News* and *Entertainment Weekly Magazine* claim "Batman: The Musical" is in "predevelopment development." Grammy-winner Jim Steinman, the composer/producer on both of Meat Loaf's "Bat Out Of Hell" albums, has been approached to create the musical score.

"Jim has been offered the project, but we're still negotiating the final deal, so it's not an official contract yet," Steinman's manager, David Sonenberg says. "My guess is it'll be official in March. It should be terrific, this is a marriage made in some netherworld." (We dunno 'bout you, but this last statement terrifies us.)

What's DC's take? "Sorry, I don't know anything about the musical," Gorfinkel says. "However, I'm happy to sing 'Bat Out Of Hell' songs over the phone while you read your Batman comics, if you like."

Uh, no thanks, Jordan. We've heard you sing.

***WIZARD'S* TAKE:** And here we thought Rob Liefeld's new autobiographical comic would be the third sign of the Apocalypse.

Before everyone cries, "But critics panned the 'Titanic' musical and 'Lion King'—and they won Tony Awards," think again. Superheroes have zero luck on the Great White Way. "It's a Bird, it's a Plane, it's SUPERMAN!" debuted on Broadway back in the '60s, lasting only 128 performances. And remember ads for "Captain America: The Musical"? That never even got off the ground.

Our advice to Warner Bros.? Leave this Bat *in* Hell.

California-based writer Scott Brick once stumbled into the Batcave clothed in only boxer shorts and a cowboy hat. The Wizard *Staff had absolutely nothing to with it. Honest.*

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRAUB

G'NORT!
one BaDass green Lantern!
Help the dozens of G'nort fans nationwide to reinstate the most heroic member of the Green Lantern Corps as the one true Green Lantern!
Take on DC Comics, subsidiary of Time Warner Inc., the most powerful force in all creation!
Force them to change their carefully laid out, long-term editorial plans just on our say-so!
JOIN...
G.E.A.T.
g'nort's emerald attack team
Ultimately futile, but it's something to do.

THE WIZARD Q&A

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN • PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

Spider-Man has a secret identity. Everyone knows that. But you don't know the *real* secret.

For 19 years, one man has slapped on the webs every time Marvel Comics has needed a Spider-Man. Someone to climb the walls at a department store grand opening? Cheer up kids at the children's hospital? Travel worldwide to meet true believers from Japan to France? This man has answered the call—he's Marvel Comics' official Spider-Man spokesmodel. Heck, he's even been in Todd McFarlane's bathroom.

"True!" our Spider-Man says of his Todd experience. "*People* magazine sent me [to Canada] in 1990, just after Todd's *Spider-Man* #1 became the best-selling comic ever. But there was some hockey tournament going on, so there were no hotel rooms. Todd suggested I spend the night at his house. He's a very gracious man." So gracious, that he even cooked Spidey "a big Canadian breakfast the next morning. With lots of bacon. Definitely a hefty meal."

Hefty meals are just one of the perks for Marvel's full-time Spidey model. The model's name? We already told you—it's a secret. It's strict Marvel policy not to name him, and the man in the suit's gotta go along with that. For the purposes of this article, we'll call him "Peter Parker." (Yeah, it's a little hokey, but just go with us on this.) And honestly, a real name doesn't matter. 'Cause when he's in the suit—and he's been in it for 1,400 Spider-appearances and counting—he *is* Spider-Man. He dons it today just to go walkin' among the True Believers of New York City, have fun and drum up support for Marvel. And the bad guys better stay out of the way.

"Peter" looks the part; he's 6-foot-2 and 200 pounds. "A little larger than life, actually," he says. "Spider-Man is listed at 5-foot-10 and 165. Marvel likes to fill the costume with stature, and that means extra height and weight."

Peter has the much-needed bounce to pull off a real-life Spidey. When he puts the costume on, he puts the character on. There's an extra spring in his step. Suddenly, he doesn't so much walk across a room—he bounds across it, ready to fend off Dr. Octopus if need be. His body language turns amazingly expressive. Every step and every quick, little twitch of the head says "Spider-Man." And even though it covers his entire face, you'd swear a mask can smile when Peter puts it on. "It's a great day to be Spider-Man," he says, geared up and ready to go. "Then again, isn't every day?"

Maybe not today. It's a thoroughly crappy winter morning. Temperatures are in the upper 30s, and rain pours down in buckets. But if there's one thing that can raise the spirits of cold, soggy New Yorkers, it's Spider-Man.

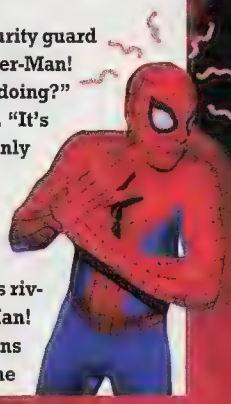
First stop: Chelsea Piers, a members-only sports club on the Hudson River. A security guard turns away people trying to sneak in, but Spider-Man gets total access. "Hey, Mr. Spider-Man! I wanna shake your hand!" the guard sings out as Spidey strolls up. "How's Aunt May doing?"

Just like the "real" Spider-Man, Peter has a snappy comeback for *every* occasion. "It's been tough," he says, shrugging his shoulders. "She died. But last year, she suddenly came back. That's comics for ya. Some days, this job has me climbing the walls."

The guard laughs and tells his own tale: "Yeah, I tried to be a superhero, too: Security-Man! But even the X-Men rejected me."

"Keep fighting the bad guys," Peter replies. "You'll get in."

A group of grade-school girls is at the Piers today on a field trip. Their attention is riveted by a gymnastics exhibition...until a certain character bounces by. "Spider-Man! Spider-Man!" they all yell. Suddenly, Peter is swarmed by two dozen armpit-high fans who just want to touch the hero they know from the cartoon. "Oh, is my face red?" he



Meet the **MYSTERY MAN** in the Spidey suit that Marvel doesn't want you to know about

SPIDE

the 'real'
R-MAN

VITAL STATS

NAME: Undisclosed (it's strict Marvel policy not to name him), we'll just call him "Peter Parker"

OCCUPATION: Actor. In addition to being Spider-Man, our Peter Parker has played in many short-term, recurring roles on soap operas, including "Guiding Light," "Ryan's Hope" and "Another World."

BORN: October 11, 1954 in Manchester, N.H.

BASE OF OPERATIONS: An apartment half a block off of Central Park in New York City.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Over 1,400 Spider-appearances on six continents. He hasn't hit Antarctica. Yet.

EVER WEAR THE BLACK SPIDEY COSTUME? "Almost. Marvel made a prototype, but it wasn't built for me. They had another guy in mind who had stuntman experience. I was excited at the prospect, but it all went downhill when that costume turned into Venom."

asks the girls' teacher. "It always gets red around pretty girls."

The love has been spread at Chelsea Piers, so Spidey hops a cab to a nearby comic store.

Wizard: So how'd you get this job in the first place?

Peter: I came to New York to be an actor, and saw an ad in *Backstage* magazine in 1979. They were looking for superhero types and people familiar with the Marvel Universe. I was a Marvel fan growing up, so I auditioned. The costume fit, I moved well, and I have a history working with kids; I've got a minor in elementary education. That's a big part of the job—being able to work with kids. Marvel decided to give me a shot.

You said you were a Marvel fan when you were younger. Any particular favorites?

Your pal and mine—Spider-Man. That's the beauty of this job. I really wanted to *be* Spider-Man when I was a kid, and look at me now. How many people can say they became what they always wanted to be when they were a kid?

What was your first job as Spider-Man?

The opening of a toy section in a department store. The appearance was totally disorganized, and they basically just kept a crowd of kids around me for hours. It was exhausting, but a lot of fun. I had never been the center of that much attention before, and I was hooked immediately. It's such a wonderful feeling.

Jim Hanley's Universe, a comic store just across the street from the Empire State Building, is expecting Spider-Man. The shop's customers are not. David Alexander, a store employee, greets him. "Hey, Peter Parker, how are ya?" he calls out. Ever in character, Spidey shushes him up immediately. "Hey!" he says. "It's supposed to be a *secret* identity, True Believer."

Spidey gets rushed to the back to surprise customers over the lunch-hour rush. Juatwan Filmore, a beauty school student from just around the corner, is part of that rush. She's looking for a Spider-Man statue, but gets more than she bargained for. She turns as Spider-Man bounds down the aisle toward her and absolutely *shrieks* as she sees him. "Shake hands with Spider-Man!" Peter says in an amplified, mega-friendly Spider-voice. "So, what's your name?"

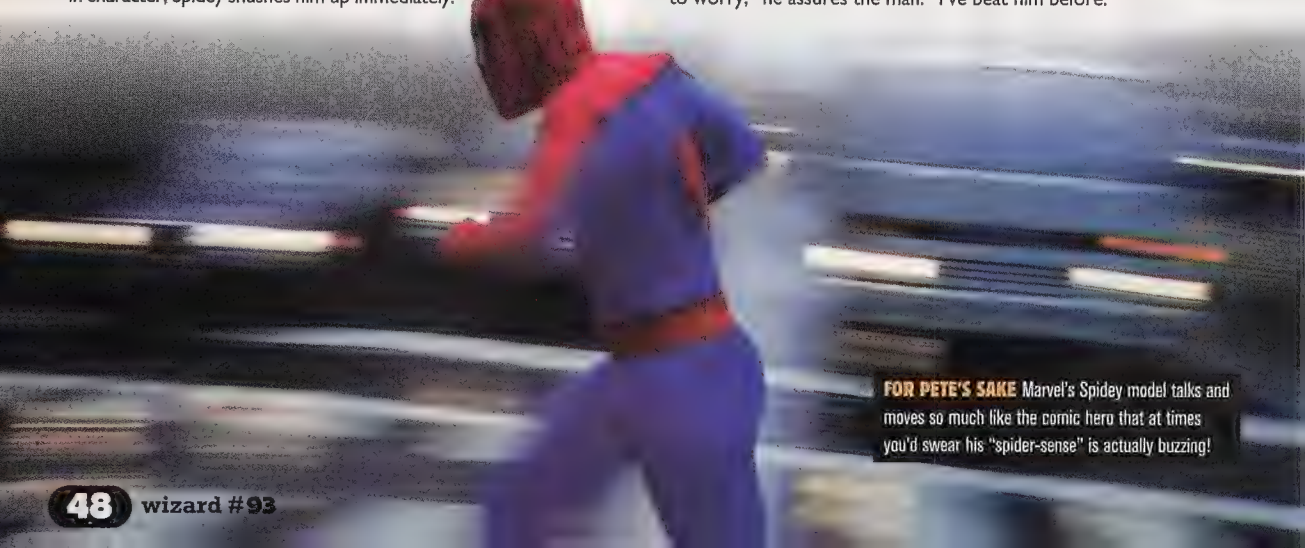
"It doesn't matter," Filmore says, looking Peter over and deciding that spandex is a good thing. "But I'll be your Spider-Girl any time you want."

They both laugh, and Peter chats things up with other fans. One customer is checking out the newest *X-Men*. "You know, that Wolverine guy has bad breath," Peter says. "You might want to look into something a bit more…spidery." The fan laughs and picks up an *Amazing Spider-Man* to go with his X-purchase. "For you, I'll give it a try," he says.

Peter makes the rounds, and after half an hour, everyone in the store is having a rollicking good time. But it's just one stop in a Spider-Man's day. "See ya in the funny papers, everyone!" Peter yells as he heads out the door.

"Come back sometime, Spidey," Alexander replies. "You're good for business, man!"

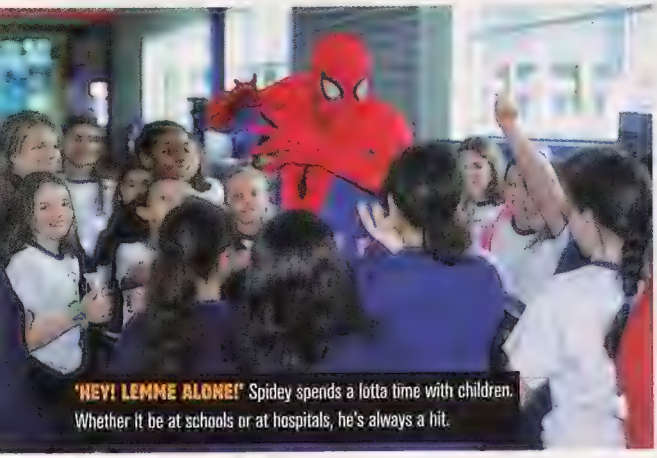
Rain continues to pour as office workers scurry from awning to awning, trying to stay dry as they hustle to lunch. No one really wants to be out, but everyone seems suddenly glad that they braved the elements when they catch a glimpse of Spider-Man. It's a simple thing, but a real day-brightener. "I *knew* my spider-sense was tingling about something," one passer-by laughs as Spidey hops by, doing his best to dodge puddles. And even though it's wet, Peter is still happy to play to the crowd. "Spidey! Look out! The Green Goblin's on the roof!" another passer-by screams. Spidey wheels in alarm and looks skyward. "Not to worry," he assures the man. "I've beat him before."



FOR PETE'S SAKE Marvel's Spidey model talks and moves so much like the comic hero that at times you'd swear his "spider-sense" is actually buzzing!

Across the street, a group of people break out into the old "Spider-Man" cartoon theme song: "Spider-Man, Spider-Man, does whatever a spider can. Spins a web, any size…"

On the opposite corner, Spidey strikes a pose, throws his arms out, and joins in the chorus: "Catches thieves, just like flies! Look out! Here comes the Spider-Man!" The crowd goes wild. A dozen more people join in for a second verse. Everyone's getting wet, but no one seems to mind. "I swear I hear that song a hundred times a day," Peter says. "But I really don't get tired of it." He continues to roll down the street, toward the Times Square subway station.



'HEY! LEMME ALONE!' Spidey spends a lotta time with children. Whether it be at schools or at hospitals, he's always a hit.

Wizard: So what's your favorite memory in costume?

Peter: There was this promotion that Marvel planned at Shea Stadium with the New York Mets in 1987 to coincide with the wedding of Spider-Man in the comic book [*Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #21]. I was there as Spider-Man, and the Mary Jane model and I got "married" about 10 minutes before the game started. They had a heart set up on home plate, Stan Lee performed the ceremony, and my best man was Captain America. I said "With this ring, I do thee web," and all of that. Since the Mets were just coming off a World Championship, the place was sold out. After the ceremony, I carried Mary Jane to a limousine that was waiting in front of the Mets' dugout. The chauffeur slipped me a Mets cap, and I popped up through the roof of the limousine with this Mets cap on, and 55,000 people went crazy! The sound was beyond belief. It was the biggest crowd I ever played to!

How about the worst?

I was at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, and they were going to introduce me on this 12-foot-high stage. I saw that there was a six-foot platform below the stage, and then another six feet down to the ground. I decided to come running out and jump onto the platform, then down onto the ground to run across to my fans.

But as I came running out, the sun just came out from behind a cloud. When the light caught these white eyes in my mask, I was blinded. But I couldn't stop, so I blindly leapt off the stage. I missed the platform. Both knees were locked, and I landed on the ground from a twelve-foot height—Boom! I could feel both ankles swell up to the size of grapefruits. All I could do was crawl across to 8,000 fans. But I managed to get through the day.

Well, Spider-Man does crawl a lot.

Yeah, but he doesn't cry. And I was almost crying beneath the mask. It hurt like crazy.

They call Times Square the "Crossroads of the World." You can see damn near anyone or anything there. But today, many commuters see Spider-Man up close for the first time. And Betty Roberg, an oldish woman of 60 years or so, is unimpressed. "How come you're taking the train with the rest of us?" she asks. "I thought you superheroes had special means of locomotion that normal people do not have."

Caroline Laing, a 30-something Spider-fan, rushes to Spidey's rescue. "He has his webs, which he usually swings around town on," she says.

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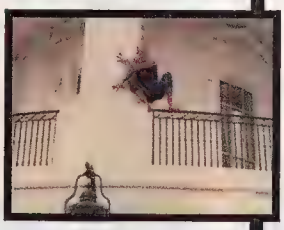
SPIDEY'S SCRAPBOOK

He might not travel to Latveria or the Savage Land, but the real-life Spidey model has been all over the world during his 19-year stint, having some wild adventures all his own. Take a peek at some highlights in Spidey's photo album:

WASHINGTON, D.C.



Spider-Man's appearance at the 1979 White House Easter Egg Roll ended...violently. "There was an unguarded stairway to the White House balcony," our Spidey says. "I dashed up there, and this photo was taken a split second before two Secret Service men grabbed me, wrestled me to the floor, and hustled me off." But couldn't spider-strength have saved the day? "Sure. But I didn't want to beat these guys up in front of the president."

TOKYO

Spidey was tapped for a Japanese cell phone ad in 1998. "They wanted a straight-forward, muscular-looking superhero pose," Spidey says. "But it was actually my idea to do something with more attitude–arms crossed, and throw the hip in there. They went with it, and now there are giant, poster-sized ads of this all over Tokyo."

MILAN, ITALY

Spidey got the homecoming queen treatment for 1990's Milan Book Fair, a major publishing convention. "For some reason, this happens to me in European cities," Spidey says. "They'll just wheel me around the city in a convertible to get reaction and drum up a crowd for the con. That's always fun."

CANNES, FRANCE

Spidey went wall-crawling at the 1993 Cannes Film Festival. "Someone asked me to show my spider-powers, and I did this." (Photo shown at right.) No big deal, you say? Not when it's a 200-foot fall over the edge to a cocktail party below! "My boss saw this once I got back, and she really had my hide. If Spider-Man killed himself and it was on the front page of the newspaper, it would have been bad news." ■ JM

"But today, he's patrolling the subways, right?"

"That's right, ma'am," Peter chimes in, hamming it up for the crowd. "And we'll be taking the 'S' train today. That's 'S' for 'Spider-Man.'"

The train pulls into Grand Central Terminal, and Spidey mingles with the crowd. Nobody can resist smiling when they see Spider-Man. Even old, grumpy-looking people—they smile. Sometimes, small children can be apprehensive right off the bat. But Peter has a great demeanor with them. One little girl in a green jacket seems scared, but her mother keeps pushing her toward Spider-Man. Peter kneels right down to her level and carefully extends a hand. He tells her in quiet, calm tones, "Don't be afraid, honey. I'm one of the good guys." After a few seconds, she takes Spidey's hand and decides that although he may look scary, he's a nice guy after all. An observer on the side is amazed. "She was ready to cry a second ago. Now she's smiling. That guy's good."

The afternoon rush hour approaches. Since Spidey hasn't eaten all day, he hops a cab to a restaurant.

Wizard: What's the best part of this job? The money? The fun? The people?

Peter: I'd say it's the children as much as anything. I've done lots of elementary school appearances.

Doing what?

Talking about child abuse prevention. About 10 years ago, Marvel published a comic where Spider-Man saved a kid from being abused. So I worked with the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse to do a school presentation. I wrote up a 20-minute script, and went in to talk to kids as Spider-Man about abuse.

How do they react?

It never fails—you look out at the crowd in these assemblies with as many as 600 kids, and pick out the kids with these problems. They're the ones squirming in their chairs. But I'd tell them about these experiences, and very often, they'd come up to me afterward and let out their secrets—that they had been abused.

That's gotta be tough.

I went to a psychiatric hospital in Atlanta where they had 20 kids who had gone through severe, severe abuse. Many of them refused to talk to anyone. They told me it was going to be tough, so I just threw the script out the window and spoke from the heart. The kids were fearful at first, but they all came up and wanted to hug me by the end. I went back to my hotel exhausted. Then I got a call from one of the doctors. He was in tears. He said, "You have no idea how much you've done. Seven of the most severe cases that have been in denial for years have decided, thanks to your presentation, to talk about what happened to them." I was totally blown away.

Can they open up because you're Spider-Man?

I think Spider-Man is familiar. Because of that, kids might listen to Spider-Man more than they would some person in a suit who stands up there and talks about a problem. I'm not really sure. But if I get that kind of effect, I really don't care.

The Delta Grill restaurant in Hell's Kitchen is quiet in this just-before-dinner time. Only a few tables are occupied. But one patron has a question. "Hey, Spider-Man, when's your movie coming out?" he calls from across the room.

Finally, after a whole day of snappy patter, Peter runs up against the one question he has no answer to. "Uh...any day now?"

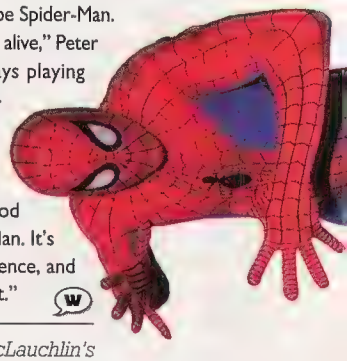
Peter excuses himself to the men's room. He comes back with the mask off, and a trench coat covering most of his costume. But his knife and fork are held by telltale Spider-Man gloves. And his feet?

"Yeah, they're wet today," he laments. "But sometimes, you don't have a choice. And you saw it today. People come running up to me like I'm their best friend. And if they're excited to see me, then I'm excited to see them as well."

After some Cajun food to warm up, he's ready to roll. So is Peter walking out as a civilian? Or Spider-Man?

"No, I'm ready to go like this," he says, pulling his mask on. "But if you could grab my bag, that would be great. I don't want to be weighed down when I'm walking down the street. People will see me like this, and they expect Spider-Man to be Spider-Man.

"I consider myself the luckiest guy alive," Peter continues. "I've had over 1,400 days playing Spider-Man. On any given day, I average a thousand handshakes. I get a thousand greetings. I put a thousand smiles on people's faces. So do the math: That's well over a million good feelings I've experienced as Spider-Man. It's been a wonderful, wonderful experience, and a wonderful life. And it ain't over yet."



Wizard Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin's feet also got really wet from following this guy around all day in the rain, and he cried like a little sissy-girl about it. The panty-waist.

FROM THE BEST-SELLING SEGA VIDEO GAME!

COUNTDOWN TO
WIZARD
2000

Don't touch that dial! 'Wizard' dreams up five must-see cartoons that really rate.

8 in 1

By the *Wizard* staff

Original illustrations by Mike Wieringo, Dev Madan, Ethan Van Schiver and Fred Perry

tv is a weird place.

Sitcoms are dull. Talk shows, absurd trailer park theatrics. The only thing networks believe can save the day? Cartoons.

And why not?

For all the tediously tired sitcoms and talk shows, there're more cartoons than ever on the tube. "Batman Beyond." "The Simpsons." "King of the Hill." "South Park." Heck, even "Dilbert" has made a splash. Seems to us that the time is ripe for more comic book-related animated series.

Wizard's got a couple ideas. So pick up that imaginary remote control, sit back in that easy chair, and we'll give you a better half-hour than "Jesse" or "Veronica's Closet" would any day.

JLA

THE SETUP: The Super Friends they *ain't*. Dispelling any comparisons to its cartoon forebear, this Justice League 'toon would ditch the bland, PC stories in favor of high-octane heroics facing impossible odds on a planetary scale. Lighter in tone than the animated "Batman" and a little more intense than "Superman," our "JLA" team would only star DC's big shots: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Flash, Aquaman and Martian Manhunter.

It won't just be all-out action, though. Keeping in tune with the Kids' WB! 'toons producers' successful "personal touch" style of storytelling, "JLA" would occasionally spotlight single characters for solo stories.

Oh, and for consistency's sake, the character designs would fit seemlessly into the "Batman/Superman" cartoon world that already exists. And heck, we'd get the same guys who voice Bats, Supes and any other JLAer that's been on the current cartoons.

WHY JLA: They're the most recognizable characters on Earth, that's why. Even the dumbed-down "Super Friends" cartoon of the 1970s proved this cartoon has staying power, running for more than 12 seasons with merchandising up the wazoo. In a modern world, Warner Bros. would make quadruple the cash with "JLA."

The only thing we'd do differently this time around? No Wonder Twins.

Danger Girl

THE SETUP: This one's got everything. The globetrotting, high adventure of "G.I. Joe," the tongue-in-cheek humor of "Animaniacs" and the sex appeal of Daphne from "Scooby Doo" times three.

Specializing in nonstop action, "Danger Girl" stars Abbey Chase, supported by Natalia Kassle and Sydney Savage—each specializing in different areas of global espionage for the secret spy organization called Danger Girl.

WHY DANGER GIRL: It's strong enough for a man, but made for a woman. Guys'll love the sex appeal, chicks'll dig the strong female heroics. Who *wouldn't* tune in to a cartoon à la "Charlie's Angels"? This bridging of the gender gap would open the mass-marketing door for tons of things. Especially a toy line that's half-Barbie, half-vintage-G.I. Joe, with a variety of removable action outfits and accessories. Heck, you could even combine the Malibu Beach House *and* a kung-fu grip!

OH BEHAVE Shaggable fem-bots! Smashing super-spies! Frickin' laser beams! Yeahhh, baby!!

BAD MUTHA He slices. He dices. And he can balance a snack tray on his head.

Blade

THE SETUP: He's the baddest monster hunter around. Picking up where the movie left off, this HBO-tailored 'toon sees Blade traveling the globe, ridding the world of its most heinous creatures. The bloody way.

For this 'toon to succeed, Blade must expand his horizons from Deacon Frost and his vampire brood to werewolves, mummies and all kinds of nasties. Along the way, Blade'll encounter occasional guest monster hunters (perhaps descendants of classic heroes Dr. Van Helsing and Sherlock Holmes would help stake a claim).

WHY BLADE: Kids love monsters, kids love seeing monsters get whacked and kids love tough guys. And they don't come much tougher than Blade.

Battle Chasers

THE SETUP: Think *Dungeons & Dragons*, "Star Wars" style. Combining fantasy elements like swords and sorcery with high-tech blasters and vehicles, an anime-style "Battle Chasers" would translate into a killer cartoon series.

With a diverse main cast including robotic war golem Calibretto, dangerously seductive Red Monika, badass swordsman Garrison and Gully, the most powerful 10-year-old ever, there'd be some big-time battle scenes. Not to mention plenty of team interaction with room for solo stories. Throw in some mystery about each Chaser's past and some twisted villains like werewolves and an enormous, bull-like demon, and you'd be hard-pressed not to be sucked into this fantastic world.

WHY BATTLE CHASERS: Fantasy sells. Disney's proven it with timeless classics like "Snow White," "Cinderella" and "Beauty and the Beast." Heck, even live-action TV shows like "Xena" and "Hercules" kick butt in the ratings. Kids have always and will always dig knights in shining armor, damsels in distress and monstrous bad guys. Toss in spiffy-keen, Transformer-like robots like Calibretto, the killer swordsman Garrison and a superpowerful little girl that kids can relate to, and—BAMMO!—you've got yourself a sure-fire hit.

DREAM ON We hope this cartoon comes out on time. Or we'll be watchin' "Crimson: The Cartoon."

Saturday Morning Fever

'Wizard' pitches five wholesome hits for Saturday mornings

PREACHER

Kids'll be exposed to all walks of life in this wholesome family series. The series stars former preacher Jesse Custer, who teaches youngsters biblical "eye-for-an-eye" values and all kinds of neat new vocabulary words. At Jesse's side are strong-willed girlfriend Tulip and carefree vampire pal Cassidy, who demonstrate the evils of violence and alcohol abuse. Plus, teens can relate to the slightly disfigured burnout Arseface, explore their sexuality with the bald fascist Herr Starr, and be exposed to the world's prejudices through that kooky racist, the Meat Man.

SIN CITY

Follow the madcap adventures of hardened hero Marv, as the big lug makes his way through the playful streets of Sin City. There's Goldie, the exotic nude dancer who captures our hero's luckless heart and leads him on a mystery through the killer-ninja, whore-infested part of town and the bullet-ridden bodies of his barroom buds. It's sinfully entertaining!

SANDMAN PRESENTS LUCIFER

Sure, he's the fallen angel, Lord of the Flies, The Devil, Lucifer. But kids'll learn that there's good in everyone. Even Satan. Catch the zany antics of Hell's former ruler, as he spends his days running a funky night club and traveling the countryside with faithful teen sidekick Rachel.

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE

Wesley Dodds is a nerdy socialite by day and fearless crime fighter by night. Armed with a gas mask and sleeping-gas gun, the Sandman takes on gay bashers, genital mutilators and all-you-can-eat carnivores, all set in the wonderfully historical backdrop of World War II. Fun *and* educational!

CHERRY

For teenagers, growing up is hard. But the biggest problem facing teens? How to deal with their sexuality. This series explores those coming-of-age years through the eyes of high-schooler Cherry Poptart, a spunky blonde who's not afraid to assume an unpopular position. In her never-ending quest to come to grips with the opposite sex, Cherry pops plenty of hard questions that'll have you trembling with anticipation.

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BOOB TUBE Finally, a cartoon that'll be filled with lots of body bags *and* fun bags

Savage Dragon

THE SETUP: Yeah, yeah...we know there was a "Savage Dragon" cartoon a couple years back, but c'mon, just about everyone (including creator Erik Larsen) would rather forget about it.

The "Dragon" 'toon WE wanna see plays off the kick-ass, envelope-pushing stories we read every month in the comics. A Chicago cop, this super-strong Dragon stands alone in a corrupt town, enforcing the law against superpowered freaks like the giant chicken Powerhouse, Hitler's gun-toting brain and even the super-smart Brainiape. With plenty of over-the-top, Quentin Tarantino-esque violence, oodles of nudity for nudity's sake and a casual use of profanity, this baby would fit perfectly into HBO's animated lineup.

WHY SAVAGE DRAGON: It's the ultimate "guy" show. Combining soap opera, comedy, cheesecake and mega-violence, "Dragon" comes across as so hysterically over-the-top, it'd appeal to males everywhere who like "Baywatch" and "WWF Raw."

"Dragon" makes fun of superheroes in such a clever way that it doesn't insult comic fans or people who think comics are dumb to begin with. Its stories race at breakneck speed with so many left turns you never know what's gonna happen next. If a cable network wanted guys glued to their televisions, "Dragon" has got the goods.

the vertigo HORROR anthology

flinch

The New Face of HORROR

Stories by
Jim Lee, Richard Corben,
Garth Ennis, Bill Sienkiewicz,
Bruce Jones, Bernie Wrightson,
Paul Gulacy, Frank Quitely,
Joe R. Lansdale, Tim Bradstreet,
Bruce Timm, Kent Williams,
Ted McKeever, Phil Jimenez,
and others

THE SHOCKS BEGIN IN APRIL

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CASTING call

WIZARD casts its own STUPID MOVIE!

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

Wizard gets two-dimensional! In the spirit of April Fools' Day, we here at *Wizard* thought it might be appropriate to mix things up for this issue's "Casting Call."

In yet another shameless scheme to get our ugly mugs into the magazine, we figgered instead of matching comic book characters to real-life actors (as we normally do), we'd do something that would push the envelope of "Casting Call." Something that would visually invite and excite even the most jaded of fans. Something so ridiculous, even our most hated enemies would giggle like li'l schoolgirls.

Our plan? We'd cast comic book characters as ourselves. (See? We told you it was ridiculous.) The dopier the match, the better. The more absurd it was, the more we liked it.

But don't take our word for it. See for yourself. We're sure you'll agree.

BIZARRO as PAT McCALLUM

A twisted mockery of man, a failed attempt to mimic human life...nah, not Bizarro, that's our Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum. But see...a perfect match!

ELONGATED MAN as BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

As forgettable in real life as the Elongated Man is in comics, Editor Brian Cunningham utilizes his rubbery-faced hijinks in a futile effort to make people like him.

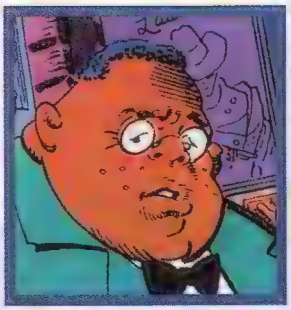
PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRAUD

HOBGOBLIN as JOE YANARELLA

Happy-go-lucky Senior Managing Editor Joe Yanarella—seen here at a screening of "There's Something About Mary"—smiles as often as Spider-Man's completely insane goblin foe.

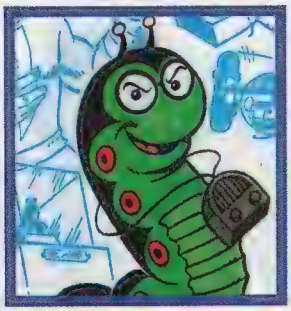
FREDDY FEMUR as ANDREW KARDON

What *doesn't* Managing Editor Andrew Kardon have in common with *Strangers in Paradise*'s shallow, womanizing, completely unlikable Freddy Femur?



CHUNK as JUSTIN JONES

Wizard's newest team member, Copy Editor Justin Jones, will most likely quit after he sees we've cast him as Flash's gelatinous pal.

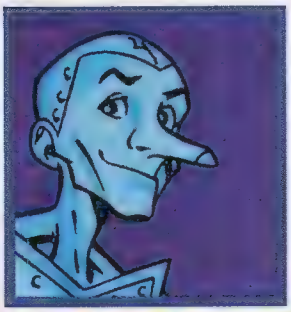


MR. MIND as GREG ORLANDO

Having long ago sold his soul to the sweet, sweet tequila worm, it's appropriate that Copy Editor Greg Orlando is played by one: Captain Marvel's archfoe, Mr. Mind.

THE PRANKSTER as JIM McLAUCHLIN

...words fail us. Move on to the next one.



TIN as LARS PEARSON

Shiny on the outside, cold and dead on the inside, Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson may very well be one of the Metal Men. If so, DC Comics owes us some dough.

BOB MARSHALL as SANDMAN

Seen here from his cameo in "Grease," Price Guide Editor Bob Marshall only owns black clothing, making his casting as the Goth Lord of the Dreaming a perfect fit.

IVANA BAIUL as CASSIE LOPUSNAK

Able to compel any man to do her bidding, Administrative Assistant Cassie Lopusnak rules *Wizard* more ruthlessly than the vile Baiul runs I.O.

SNAPPER CARR as STEVE BLACKWELL

'70s teen heartthrob and current *Wizard* Design Manager Steve Blackwell may be a *Wizard* hanger-on like Snapper was to the JLA, but he helps clean the bathrooms, so we'll let him stay.

AJAX as MIKE BENCIC

Wizard's token Canadian—when not battling Popeye for the affections of Olive Oyl—has often battled the Hulk to a standstill, just like the Pantheon's dimwitted Ajax.

KATANA as ARLENE SO

Though she's angrily accused us of just picking some random Asian female character to play her, we stand by our choice for this Outsider to play our feisty designer…even if she's right.

VEXT as JAMES A. WALKER

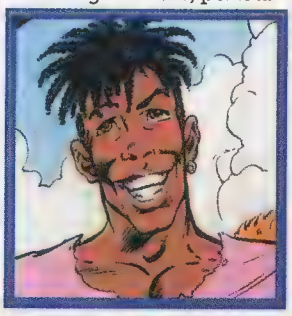
Color-blind Designer James "Jimmy" Walker, Texas Ranger, may scare away women with his taste in clothes, but with the groupies he'll get after DC's dopey deity Vext plays him, he'll be just fine.

CELSIUS as TESSLYN PANDARAKALAM

She's threatening to sue this company for every cent it's got if we "Photoshop" a red dot on her head, so we're not making any jokes here and just saying Celsius would make a great Tess, period.

DOCTOR OCTOPUS as DAN REILLY

Official Crest spokesman Dan Reilly didn't have to cut his hair a special way for this photo shoot. Anyway, the likeness between our research editor and Spidey's lamest foe is too scary.

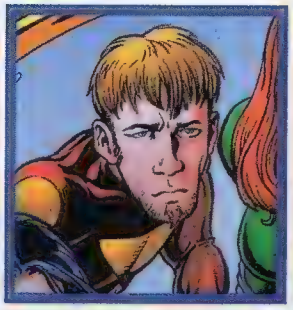


JIM WILSON as NACHIE CASTRO

When not working as a body double for TV's Marla Gibbs, Research Assistant Nachie Castro is destined to die alone and in a dark room, like the Hulk's ex-sidekick Jim Wilson.

BILLY BATSON as PHIL COLLIGAN

Unlike the magical transformation that occurs when Billy Batson says "Shazam!," absolutely nothing happens whenever Research Assistant Phil Colligan says anything.



BURNOUT as ANDRÉ SHELL

Possessing 29 percent more forehead than he needs, André is yet another in an endless stream of research assistants. He's just as much a nonentity as his comic counterpart, Gen[13]'s Burnout.

"THIS PLACE IS EVIL!"

"Evil?...
..Evil is a fuzzy kitten and a pink ball of yarn compared to what you'll find in this neighborhood—even the donuts are bad for you."

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ANIMATORS ASSEMBLE!

Fox finally unites the Avengers for Saturday mornings

Avengers Assemble! Yep, the battle cry has finally gone out, but you won't believe who's responding.

After months of speculation, Fox Kids has finally announced an "**Avengers**" animated series for its Saturday morning lineup this fall. Produced in cooperation by Marvel Studios and Saban Entertainment (the latter being responsible for Fox's "**X-Men**," "Spider-Man" and "Silver Surfer" series), 13 episodes of "Avengers" have already been ordered.

The biggest question surrounding Earth's Mightiest Heroes, as always, is the team roster. Since the comic's inception back in 1963, the Avengers' membership has undergone more changes than basketball player Dennis Rodman's hair. Everyone from Captain America to the Incredible Hulk has been a part of Marvel's premier superteam. Unfortunately, with a number of gag orders in place, no "official" team roster has been released as of press time.

Thanks to a number of inside sources, however, some unexpected character names have popped up. The Vision, Scarlet Witch, Hawkeye, Tigra, Justice, The Falcon, Wonder Man, Ant-Man and the Wasp all have a strong shot at making the final cut. Comic artists **Chris Bachalo** (*Uncanny X-Men*) and Chuck Wojtkiewicz (*Justice League America*) have already provided character sketches for the aforementioned heroes and the team's main mode of transportation the Quinjet.

"**Bob Harras** [Marvel Editor-in-Chief] called me up a few months ago and asked me if I'd be interested in redesigning The Avengers," Bachalo, who worked up a number of versions for Wonder Man and Ultron, said. "I think the characters are already fantastic characters. I wasn't real hip on redesigning them, so how do I take what's already great and not ruin what's been established? What I wanted to do is take the essence of the character and tweak it enough so that it's a little more contemporary, a little more modern."

Bachalo worked up three versions of each character, including a Wonder Man who was a little more intimidating and covert, with big shoulder pads and a belt.

"With Wonder Man, his signature elements are his jacket, which I've always liked, and his glasses," Bachalo added. "So each has a version of the coat and a version of the glasses."

According to Wojtkiewicz's designs, all the

AVENGERS RESEMBLE Even though the animated Avengers won't look this way, expect the roster to include everybody but two of the three big guns: Captain America, Iron Man and Thor.

HOLLYWOOD AND TV STUFF THAT YOU CARE ABOUT

ons

BREAKING NEWS!!!

NEWS FLASH!

SPIDEY MOVIE A GO!!!

As this issue of *Wizard* was going to press, we learned that the long-awaited "Spider-Man" movie has *finally* broken free of the six-year-long legal battle holding it back. Woo hoo! According to published reports, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Marvel Enterprises have reached an agreement allowing Sony to create a major motion picture and TV shows based on Marvel's flagship character. Now the studio can begin culling talent, including **James Cameron** (whose "Spider-Man" movie treatment is now Sony's property) and **Jim Carrey**, who have both expressed interest. **LOOK FOR MORE NEXT MONTH!**

characters will have a shoulder pad with the "A" as a unifying group theme, as well as "A"-embossed belt buckles. The Falcon will have metallic wings instead of his old draped ones, and be accompanied by a robotic, morphing falcon. But his favorite character is the tiniest of all: Ant-Man.

"I always felt that Ant-Man's costume was kind of out there," Wojtkiewicz said of scientist Hank Pym's alter ego. "It didn't look very ant to me. I think I was able to retain the feel of the character yet make him more ant-like. His helmet has that weird little microphone mounted on the two big things. They became more like mandibles, they're molded into the helmet. He's this two-fisted scientist, so he's got all this scientific stuff. He just looks kind of buggy."

Missing from the cast of characters, however, are the big guns—Thor, Iron Man, Captain America. These three have always played a key part in Avengers history. So, are any of them joining up? Don't hold your breath.

"I had gotten my life-long dream to do this series," **Bob Skir**, who was given the green light to develop an Avengers animated series back in 1997, said. "But when [Fox's] edict came down that we could do Avengers, [they said] we can't use Thor and Iron Man and those guys [because the company had other plans for them]—you have to do the obscure characters." Pausing to laugh, Skir added, "I'm thinking, 'I think I can do that.'"

Skir, with Marty Isenberg, then turned in a detailed 13-episode story arc as well as the series bible giving the overview of the characters and the series' premise.

"I took all the characters that I loved," Skir said, "the people that never had their own book but always seemed to be part of the team that had rich histories. So what you had was a team of people who needed each other because of the relationships between them."

At that point, Fox scrapped "Avengers" in favor of a "Captain America" cartoon, which was soon killed when Marvel Comics filed for bankruptcy in 1996.

Recently, Fox called Skir and Isenberg, stating it was going to make "Avengers" for sure this time and offered the duo the story editor position. Unfortunately, they were busy on other projects, so Fox turned to former "X-Men" story editor **Eric Leward**.

Skir wouldn't reveal too much about his 13-episode outline because he's unsure how much will be kept, but if the series sticks close to his outline, expect to see many traditional Avengers villains going up against the team such as Ultron and Baron Zemo.

"Ultron's very much there from the get-go," he said. "He's real mean. There are so many wonderful stories with him that we figured we could weave a lot of the 13 episodes around giving him a master plan. He's very undefeatable, the specter of Ultron returning is always an ongoing threat."

Just as important, the Avengers Mansion and the team's ever-faithful butler Jarvis are expected to appear up as well on the animate series. And despite initial plans and reports, at least one of those famous Marvel characters Skir was told he couldn't use, will now be part of the team.

"Long-time fans are gonna eat this up with a spoon," he said. "New viewers are going to say, 'I've never heard of these people before. My God, they're wonderful!'" ■ **PATRICK SAURIOL**

SPIDER-MAN 'BEYOND'?

SNEAK PEEK

THIS FALL, Fox Kids takes fans to an edgier New York City where a slightly different Wall-crawler and his rogues gallery exist. In the all-new "Spider-Man Unlimited" animated series, Peter Parker, his friends and even Spidey's enemies have all-new looks and origins. Saban Entertainment is producing 13 episodes of this half-hour series for the fall and another 13 ordered for the year 2000, with Michael Reaves ("Invasion America") serving as story editor. Look for tons more details next issue! ■ **PS**

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED PHOTO ™ & © 1999 FOX KIDS NETWORK.

STAR WARS PREQUEL WATCH

ANY DAY NOW...

The clock is tickin' as the calendar days get ever-so-close to the release of "Star Wars: Episode I–The Phantom Menace" (May 21, 1999), fans are learning more about the Skywalker legacy. Here's the latest:

CELEBRATE THE LOVE Can't wait till May to see this whole "Phantom Menace" hoo-hah? Well, tough, 'cause that's when it's coming out. But you can get in on the fun early if you make your way to Denver, Colo. That's because from April 30-May 2, the official Star Wars Fan Club and *Star Wars Insider* magazine (in conjunction with Lucasfilm Ltd., of course) are throwing a party to rock the stars.

Star Wars Celebration 1999 is THE event of the millennium. Housed in the 100,000 square foot Wings over the Rockies Air and Space Museum in Denver Colo., the three-day event showcases celebrities such as producer Rick McCallum, Anthony Daniels (C-3PO), Ray Park (Darth Maul) and Terry Brooks (author of "The Phantom Menace" novel); there's also plenty of attractions such as an exhibition from the Lucasfilm archives of Star Wars Classic and "Episode I" props and models, a life-size X-Wing fighter, a Naboo fighter prop, behind-the-scenes footage from "Phantom Menace," computer games, trivia and more.

Advance tickets are $34 per person for the three-day event. Call 1-800-878-3326 for tickets and more information.

POD PEOPLE One of the biggest action sequences of "The Phantom Menace" will be the pod race, where a young Anakin Skywalker races to win his freedom from the winged Toydarian junk dealer Watto. Just like a chariot, the pod driver sits in a separate cockpit (picture a mini-landspeeder for one person) that's connected by tether to two massive engines running ahead of the cockpit. (Rumor has it George Lucas based the pod race around the chariot race from the classic 1959 "Ben Hur.")

None other than the notorious crime lord Jabba the Hutt presides over the ceremony. Reportedly the racers must salute Jabba, just as the charioteers did back in the days of ancient Rome.

Anakin will be competing against some weird-looking aliens. There's Gasgano, an extremely thin, light gray six-limbed being; Ody Mandrell, who looks like a head, neck and pair of duck's feet stuck together; and Sebulba, a horse-faced bad guy who's got a major hate-on for Anakin. Who wins? C'mon, we can't spoil the whole movie for you, can we? ■ PS

PHOTOS © 1998 LUCASFILM LTD. THE PHANTOM MENACE

MAKING MOO-VIES

Top Cow goes Hollywood with 'Witchblade' on TV, animated 'Fathom' feature film

After months of zero activity, Top Cow's "**Witchblade**" TV series got a much-needed shot in the arm when screenwriter **J.D. Zeik** ("Ronin") was hired to pen a new two-hour pilot.

"The writer we had before just wasn't working out for us," Top Cow founder **Marc Silvestri** said of the decision. "It wasn't bad stuff or anything like that, it just wasn't the right flavor for 'Witchblade.'" Zeik's deadline was the end of February, then he moves on to write the pilot episode for James Cameron's as-yet-untitled sci-fi series for Fox TV's fall schedule. "Witchblade" casting should be finalized in the spring, with the show shooting in Toronto during the summer and hopefully debuting this fall on TNT.

As for Michael Turner's immensely popular ***Fathom*** series, rumors have been flying that Fox Feature Animation is planning an animated film on the mysterious underwater concept. Fox may produce the film at a Japanese studio to combine cutting-edge animation with tons of computer effects, avoiding the fairy-tale feel of the company's previous animated release "Anastasia." Top Cow could act as a producer, supplying storyboards, matte paintings and character designs. As of press time, neither company would comment on the deal.

Top Cow also has some other projects heating up fast. Silvestri is writing the script for **"The Project,"** a movie about a clandestine government agency whose experiments have created three young adults with fantastic mind powers. Produced by Alliance-Atlantis, the movie is targeted for a 2000 release and will serve as the launching point for a planned ongoing TV series. And this September, Top Cow's "Foo" and "Vidiots" will be broadcast on Eruptor Entertainment's Internet site www.eruptor.com. The 3-D computer-animated "Vidiots" follows the adventures of three exiled, alien, video game characters, while the more traditional 2-D animated "Foo" centers on a 19-year-old Asian American who works at a hip publishing company. Check out the Web site in April for 11-minute pilots of both Internet shows. ■ PS

SCHWINGBLADE Top Cow's tomatoes titillate TV, toons.

McFARLANE IS DOOMED

Spawn creator to design creatures for popular video game movie

After showing you Spawn's Hell, creator **Todd McFarlane** is back for more—this time designing the big-budget "DOOM" movie based on the video game hit *DOOM*. Todd McFarlane Entertainment will provide story and creature design concepts for the project, currently under development at Sony Pictures.

"Todd and I have been brought in to creatively produce it," **Terry Fitzgerald**, president of TME said of their involvement. "Todd is overseeing the script and character design. It's a nice deal because we can participate in the creative levels from story to character to licensing without having to steer the film as traditional producers."

Producer Moe Lospinoso is excited about the unique look Spawn's creator can bring to the "DOOM" film. "I think they're going to bring their cult status, their pulse, to this medium," he said. "Computer games are the comic books of the '90s. I think Todd has a pulse on pop culture. Understanding his view on comic books and their stories, I think he will lend a lot to the film." Lospinoso firmly stated that fans will get to see lots of fights and frights. "It's going to be what the word 'Doom' means. We're going to try and capture what the game had in intensity and horror, and include the action."

No director, actors or a release date have been attached to the film, but you might see plenty of marines and hellfire in movie theaters by 2001. ■ PS

CHIMP CHANGE TBS monkeys with TV.

MONKEY MANIA

TBS Superstation goes totally 'Ape'

As the 20th century draws to a close, only one thing is certain—the end is near. Mankind's dismal future as prophesied in the 1968 "Planet of the Apes" film is unfolding before our very eyes, and the programming executives at Atlanta-based TBS Superstation are playing a key role.

The popular cable network has just announced plans to expand its "Monkey-ed Movies" comedy shorts into a weekly, 30-minute series tentatively called "**Channel of the Apes.**" To aid those unfamiliar with the premise, "Monkey-ed Movies" are comedy shorts featuring costumed chimpanzees and orangutans acting out scenes from popular movies such as "Titanic," "Good Will Hunting" and "As Good as it Gets." "Channel of the Apes" takes this concept one step further, placing these same acting simians in charge of their own television network.

With the laughs achieved at the industry's expense, one can't help but wonder what the Screen Actors Guild thinks of "Channel of the Apes." "Mel Gibson thought our 'Braveheart' spoof was hilarious," Lisa Atkinson of TBS said. "He called the network asking for a tape."

Premiering Thursday, June 10, "Channel of the Apes" is slated for the 10:05 p.m. (EST) time slot, immediately following the popular "WCW Thunder" pro-wrestling show. ■ ERIC MORO

"CHANNEL OF THE APES" PHOTO BY MARK HILL © 1999 TBS, INC. A TIME WARNER CO.

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MARVEL MOVIES The X-Men are a go for 2000, with the FF to follow.

FOX RETAINS MARVEL-OUS RIGHTS: After waiting for Marvel Comics to emerge from bankruptcy, Twentieth Century Fox has re-negotiated the film rights for the "Silver Surfer," "Fantastic Four" and "X-Men" movies. Fox confirmed that casting is just about to take place on "X-Men" and it should be ready for release in summer 2000, with "FF" following right behind in late 2000 or mid-2001. Things haven't been so good for the big-screen "Surfer" film; after many discarded attempts, a new script is currently being written by Mike Finch ("Wing Commander").

SPAWNING A SEQUEL: Ol' Spawny-guy, is headed back to the big screen. Currently, Spawn creator Todd McFarlane has roughed out 70-80 pages of an outline, with an anticipated date of late summer 2000 to begin shooting. "It'll be more urban like 'Seven.' Less special effects, more drama and fantasy," Terry Fitzgerald of Todd McFarlane Productions said. "We're looking at a 16-18 week shoot, and three-to-four weeks in post production. We were in post for nine-and-a-half months on the first film because of all the special effects, we used 16 effects houses."

BATMAN: YEAR ONE: While the status of the next Bat-film is still up in the air, director Joel Schumacher (the campy "Batman and Robin") has a very different direction for a fifth installment. "I would like to do Frank Miller's great 'Batman: Year One,' [*Batman* #404–#407] where Bruce Wayne is 20 and is becoming Batman, and Alfred is 40," he said. "Commissioner Gordon is 30–he's just married, his wife is having a baby, and he's having an affair with this beautiful blonde detective–and Selena Kyle, who becomes Catwoman, is this beautiful 19-year-old African-American girl living in the ghetto." African-American? Ghetto? Yeah, and Robin's a 4-foot-tall robot living in the sewers.

CAGEY SUPERMAN: Thanks to Hollywood, Superman's facing his toughest battle since Doomsday. In the continuing saga of the on-again/off-again big-budget "Superman" film, Oscar-award winning actor Nicolas Cage has hung up his tights. "'Superman,' you know, I've kind of walked away from it," Cage said. "I got my hopes up; I was going to have some fun building that character. It's just that I can't keep being the 'come here, go away,' the yo-yo effect. It's like it's on, it's off, it's on. So I'm just going to sit this one out, and when it's serious, well, hopefully I'll do it."

PARKING MOVIES SOUTH: Holy, *$@! The "South Park" movie "South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut" is scheduled to hit theaters in June. And with an "R" rating, creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone are pushing everyone's favorite gutter-mouthed tykes to the next level.

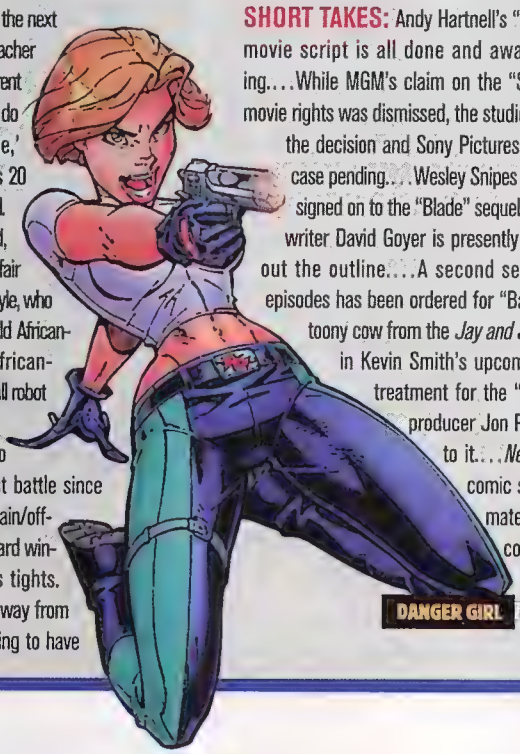
"We're both huge 'Beavis and Butt-head' fans," Stone said, "but we felt like the 'Beavis and Butt-head' movie was just a long episode. It didn't go to the next level. So we fought for an 'R' rating for our movie. That means bringing it up to a cinematic level, meaning there's a reason there's a movie beyond making a lot of money."

BIG RUSTY CASTING: The stars have been signed for Columbia Tristar's upcoming "Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot" cartoon series, based on Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's comic. Jonathan Cook ("Flirting With Disaster") provides the voice for Big Guy while Pamela Segall ("King of the Hill") does Rusty's lines. Other star voices include Jim Hanks (Tom Hanks' brother), Stephen Root ("NewsRadio"), Kathy Kinney ("The Drew Carey Show"), R. Lee Ermey ("Full Metal Jacket"), Clancy Brown ("Highlander") and Gabrielle Carteris ("Beverly Hills 90210"). Twenty-six episodes premiere this fall on Fox Kids.

GENERATION X LIVES: Remember that...uh...interesting live-action "Generation X" film from 1996? Yeah, we know you tried forgettin' all about it, but word on the street is that Fox is planning a live-action "Generation X" TV series to air on weekends. All-new actors are rumored to be involved in this project which will serve as a precursor to the big-budget "X-Men" movie in the summer of 2000.

SHORT TAKES: Andy Hartnell's "Danger Girl" movie script is all done and awaiting casting....While MGM's claim on the "Spider-Man" movie rights was dismissed, the studio will appeal the decision and Sony Pictures also has its case pending....Wesley Snipes has officially signed on to the "Blade" sequel and screenwriter David Goyer is presently hammering out the outline....A second season of 13 episodes has been ordered for "Batman Beyond."...Moody, that cartoony cow from the *Jay and Silent Bob* mini-series, will play a role in Kevin Smith's upcoming "Dogma" film....A new story treatment for the "Wonder Woman" movie convinced producer Jon Peters ("Batman") to attach himself to it....*Nexus*, Steve Rude and Mike Baron's comic series has been optioned as an animated series by Sony....Neil Gaiman is considering writing the screenplay for his "Stardust" novel. ■ **PS AND JENNY PETERS**

BLADE Snipes cuts a deal.



DANGER GIRL

"BLADE" PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW LINE CINEMA.

SIMPSONS IN SPACE

Groening's 'Futurama' shuttles animation to the next millennium

¡Ay, *caramba*! "Futurama," the new Fox Television animated series from "The Simpsons" creator **Matt Groening**, is a fast blast forward into a whacked-out future. Wise-cracking robots, tentacled aliens, one-eyed babes—they're all here, fashioned in Groening's distinctive cartoon style.

"I think we're breaking new ground here with this whole genre of sci-fi comedy," Executive Producer and head writer David X. Cohen said.

"Futurama" revolves around a pizza delivery boy named Fry who somehow gets frozen in a cryogenics lab on New Year's Eve 1999 and wakes up 1,000 years later. He encounters a world that has progressed scientifically but has also embraced the American Dream to the extreme. This future imperfect is run by corporations such as "Mom's Old-Fashioned Robot Oil," which sells robot oil instead of snake oil to more-than-willing consumers.

"The look and humor will remind you of 'The Simpsons' but there's really not much of a crossover beyond that," designer Bill Morrison said.

Still, be on the lookout for catch-phrases for each character. Instead of Bart Simpson's lovable "Eat my shorts!" Bender the corrupt robot is fond of saying, "Bite my shiny metal ass!" "We didn't plan it that way. It just sort of developed," Cohen laughed. Main characters' voices include **Billy West** ("Ren & Stimpy") as Fry, **Katey Sagal** ("Married With Children") as Fry's friend Leela, and John DiMaggio ("Chicago Hope") as Bender.

Fans dedicated to shows such as "The X-Files" and "Star Trek" are being offered a special challenge by "Futurama." Clues to a secret alien alphabet are being hidden in "freeze frame" sequences during the show. "This was one of the first ideas that Matt Groening and I came up with," Cohen said.

Thirteen episodes of "Futurama" have been given the green light by Fox, with the show debuting on March 28 following "The Simpsons," and finding its regular Tuesday night time slot beginning April 6. A comic book series from Groening's own Bongo Comics is scheduled to follow some time later in the year, hopefully kicking off at August's San Diego Comic-Con.

■ JANET HETHERINGTON

FUTURE IMPERFECT Sure, cars fly in the future, but chicks only have one eye. Ugh.

FUTURAMA ART © MATT GROENING, TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX.

BASIC TRAINING

MATT HALEY SHOWS YOU

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

HOW TO DRAW BODY LANGUAGE

PHOTO: HOLLY STEIN

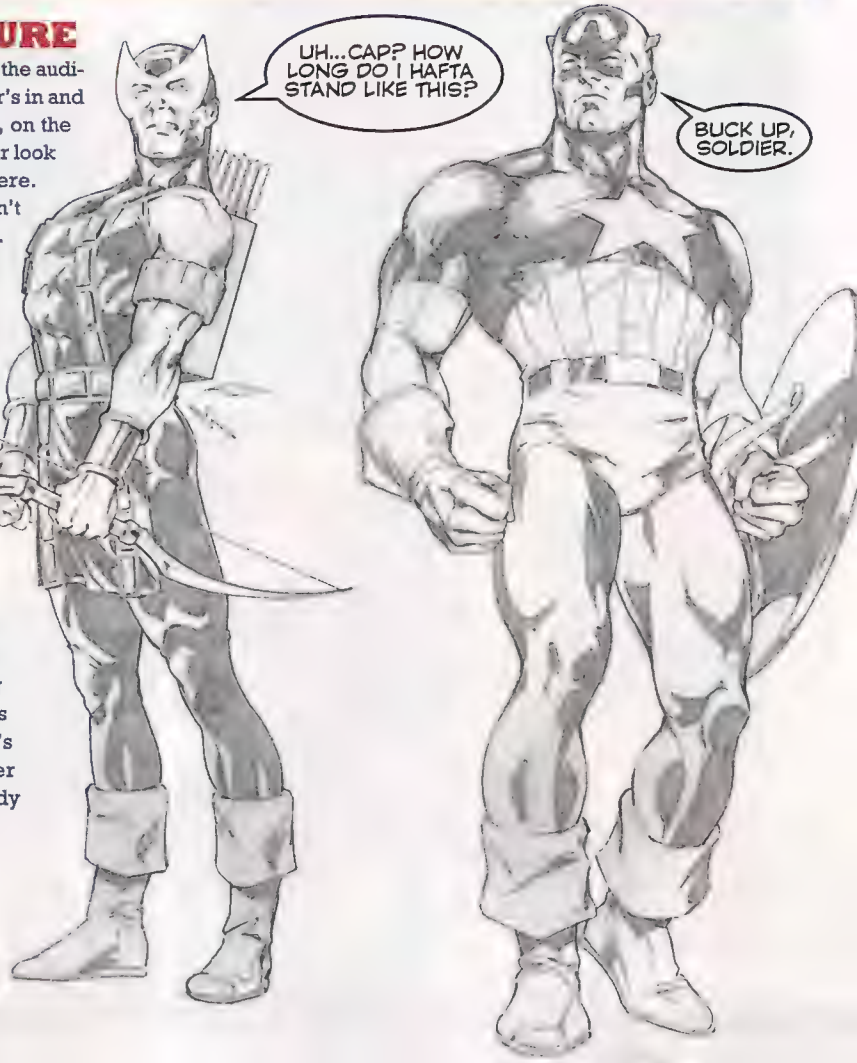
Body language is one of the most misunderstood parts of the drawing process. I know some of you out there are thinking, "What's so hard about this? Just draw a guy punching another guy, and you're done!" But it's not that simple. The term "body language" refers to the *pose* one's body adopts to convey a particular attitude or emotion. It's something we all do every day, consciously or not. If you're feeling defensive, you might fold your arms across your chest, or put your hands on your hips if you're impatient.

In the following pages, I'm going to show you just how to "pose" your characters so they seem a little more believable. Ideally, you want the reader to understand what's happening on the page without reading the word balloons, and an evocative pose can really pull the reader into your story! Now, let's get into trouble, baby...

PERFECT POSTURE

A good, believable pose should tell the audience just what mood your character's in and what he intends to do. A bad pose, on the other hand, can make your character look ridiculous! Take poor Hawkeye here. He needs a chiropractor! He doesn't look heroic, he looks uncomfortable. Look at how his back is arched and how stiffly his arms are held. It's hard to take him seriously.

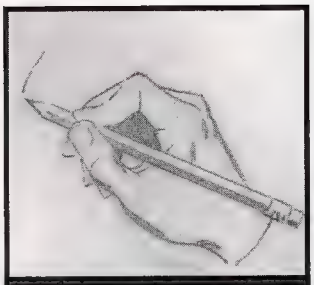
On the other hand, Captain America looks confident, heroic and believable. Even though he's standing still, he looks as if he might spring into action at any moment. Notice how it's not just the calm, self-assured look on his face, but his overall pose that tells us who he is. His arms are away from his body slightly (telling us he's ready for anything), his fists are clenched (but relaxed), and he's moving forward (to face whatever evils the writer throws at him), ready to kick Nazi butt!



GET A GRIP!

One of the most important things I learned about drawing good body language was how to hold the pencil! For years, I'd been trying to sketch my basic drawings with a firm grip meant for rendering, resulting in stiff, unnatural-looking poses. Once I was shown how to use a light "sketching" grip when breaking down a figure, my drawings suddenly became lifelike and natural! This sketching grip allows you to use the whole arm to create broad, sweeping lines. Try it.

light sketch grip

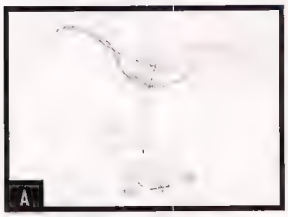


firm rendering grip

STRIKE A POSE

No matter what emotion you're trying to convey, you should always break down your figure. Here's how I ensure the most lifelike pose. First, I choose the attitude I want the character to convey. Let's say I want to draw a menacing-looking Batman. "Menacing" brings to mind an image of Dracula, especially when applying it to Batman, but since he's a superhero, Batman also needs to be dynamic.

In the first sketch (fig. A), I draw the basic line for his spine, head, arms and legs. But I realize his left leg needs a more dynamic angle, so I change it and add the cape (fig. B), which helps add motion to the figure. Now here's the key: I sketch the pose as fast as I can, drawing only the lines needed to "read" the pose. Once I'm satisfied that the pose conveys the attitude I want, I start drawing Batman's body over my initial sketch (fig. C), still using the "sketching" grip. I try not to use the "rendering" grip until I start to draw details like his hands and face (fig. D). That way, the figure will retain the menacing attitude I want without stiffening up.



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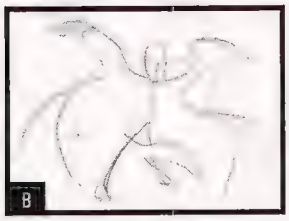

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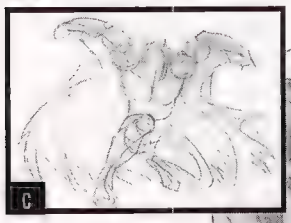

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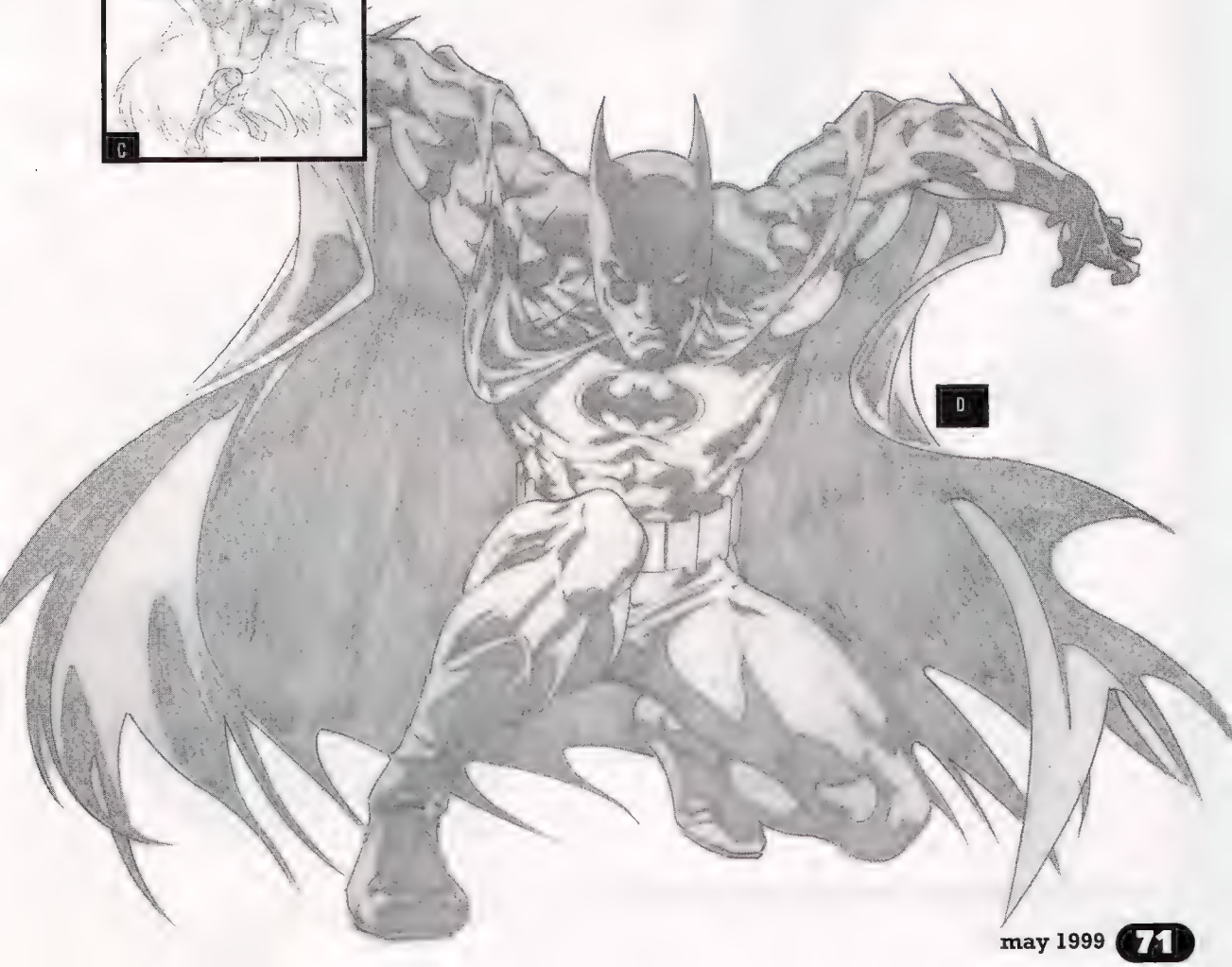
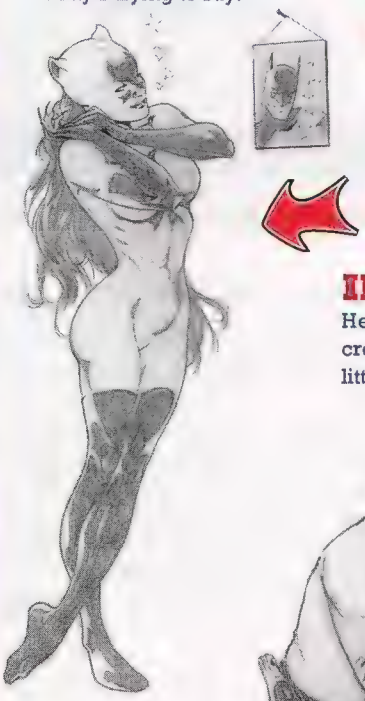


D

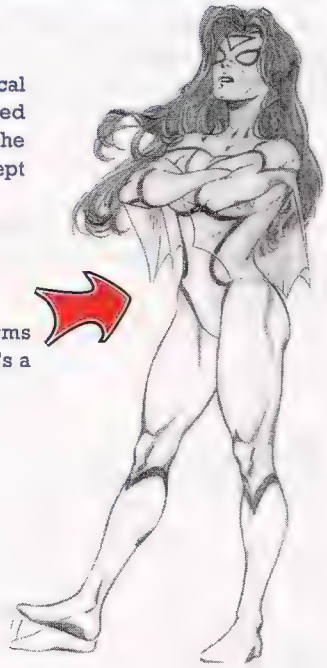
SO EMOTIONAL, BABY

Body language can convey a number of different emotions. Everything from love to shock to pain can be expressed through your movements. Here are a few examples to get you thinking about just what your body's trying to say.



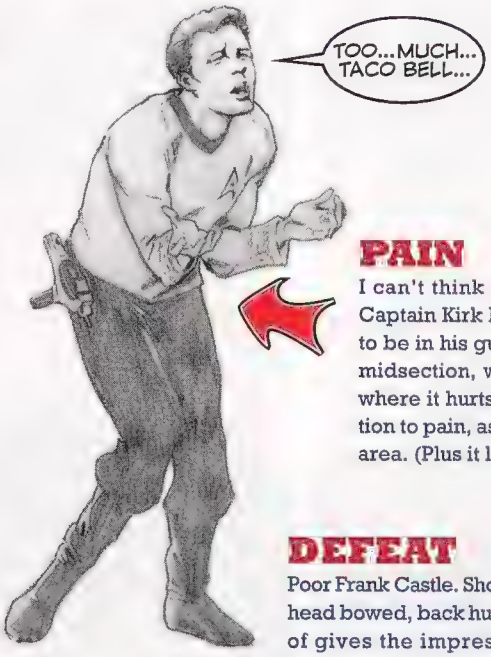
LOVE

The pose Catty's striking here is the typical pose for a girl in love. Her hands clasped over one shoulder, head tilted towards the object of her affection, and one foot swept back, all seem to say, "I'm in love!"



IMPATIENCE

Here's a typical pose for impatience—arms crossed, foot tapping. Looks like someone's a little late for a date!

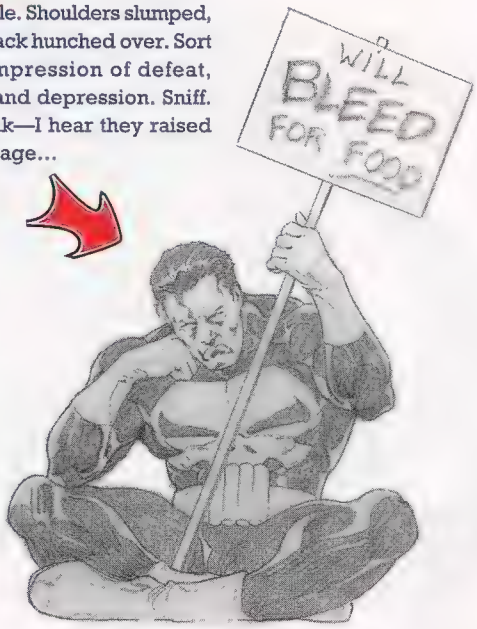


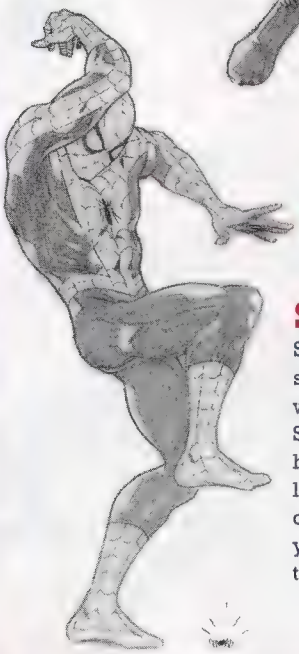
PAIN

I can't think of a better example of pain than Captain Kirk himself. Notice that the pain seems to be in his gut, so his body is folded around his midsection, with his elbows almost pointing to where it hurts. This is a natural, instinctive reaction to pain, as if to cover or protect the offending area. (Plus it looks great on camera!)

DEFEAT

Poor Frank Castle. Shoulders slumped, head bowed, back hunched over. Sort of gives the impression of defeat, despondency and depression. Sniff. Cheer up, Frank—I hear they raised the minimum wage...





SURPRISE

Surprise? That's simple, right? Not so fast! What if your character is wearing a full-face mask, like Spidey? Sure, you could cheat and have his eyeholes open wide, but let's say they're actually stitched onto his mask and can't move. Now you have to use body language to tell the story.

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DAVID PROWSE (*STAR WARS' DARTH VADER*) * JOHN ROMITA JR.
JOSHUA COX (*LT.CORWIN OF BABYLON 5*) JOE SIMON BART SEARS
ROBERT KRIMMER(*EMP.CARTAGIA OF BABYLON 5*) KEITH GIFFEN*
PHIL JIMENEZ FABIEN NICIEZA* DICK AYERS COLLEEN DORAN
LOUIS SMALL JR. MANON KELLEY JACKSON GUICE SEAN CHEN
TODD DEZAGO SCOTT HANNA JOE RUBENSTEIN MIKE DECARLO
RICH BUCKLER IRWIN HASEN BUZZ *AND MANY, MANY MORE !!*

*Not all 3 Days

WHERE THE GIRLS ARE

All right, listen up, 'cause I'm only going to say this once! (Ahem) WOMEN HAVE SPINES. Yep, just like real people! They hardly ever stand (well, float) like Darkchylde here. Man, that looks painful...and what the heck is she standing on? I know you want your female characters to be appealing, guys, but just because your favorite artist draws his female character in the same "sexy-swimsuit pose" whether she's fighting demons or burning toast doesn't mean you have to!

With a character like Gen13's Fairchild, for example, you have to depict her as strong, courageous, able and, of course, beautiful. The way she's standing—balanced, poised, with a slight tilt to the head as she looks at us over her shoulder—tells us a lot more about her than a ripped T-shirt ever could. (And hey, this example also shows how to make a woman look appealing without having to show her chest!) Just remember to treat your female characters like real people instead of swimsuit images, and they'll be a lot more memorable!

And there you have it. I could go on for pages about the many different emotions that body language displays, but unfortunately I just don't have the room. So don't forget that ultimately, the best poses come from life—watch other people and sketch them! For a perspective on the use of body language from a master, track down Will Eisner's "Comics and Sequential Art" or any work by Alex Toth and Jack Kirby (Toth being subtle and Kirby being ultra-dynamic). Whether you draw for a living or just as a hobby, giving your characters convincing body language will make the difference between an ordinary picture and an unforgettable work of art!

Matt Haley speaks 27 languages. Unfortunately, 26 of them are illegal in most of the United States. Check out his use of body language in his upcoming Event Horizon *for Image Comics.*

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ON SALE JUNE '99

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THE READERS SHOW THEIR CHOPS

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART

Dangerlicious. That's how everybody from Aaron Spelling to Adam West would describe these babes. They make up Cliffhanger's Danger Girl team, and in *Wizard* #89 we asked you dangerous readers out there to draw a variant cover for the ultra-popular *Danger Girl* comic.

In record time, the *Wizard* mailboxes were overflowing with your art for the "*Danger Girl* Variant Cover!" contest. Using the latest scientific technology from Trinidad and Tobago, we sorted through each dangerific drawing to pick the best ones.

The contest winner trots home with bags of Danger Girl merchandise, including comics and original artwork. Runners-up also win goodies. Thanks to all the would-be James Bonds who entered—and keep those drawings coming.

GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

AT GUNPOINT

Alex Milne

Brampton, Ontario, Canada

THE BOOTY

LEAPIN' LADIES!
Rush Humphrey
Bronx, NY

ABBEY CHASE, DISC WOMAN
John Creamer
Aylesford, Nova Scotia, Canada

MAJOR DANGER
Greg Millar
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Want your art to appear on one of these two pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are non-returnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

ART CONTEST

ABSTRACT STUDIO PRESENTS:

We're Having a Wedding!

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One lucky Cupid wins the chance to see his design for Francine's husband appear in the pages of *Strangers in Paradise* drawn by Terry Moore! The lucky winner will also have his name listed on the credits page of that issue. Plus, he will also get to keep the page of art that his design appears on. But that's not all! He will also get all five *Strangers in Paradise* trade paperbacks: *The Collected SIP, Vol. One*, *SIP: I Dream of You*, *SIP: It's A Good Life*, *SIP: Love Me Tender* and *SIP: Immortal Enemies* all signed by Moore, plus a Strangers In Paradise T-shirt.

SECOND PRIZE (3): Three messengers of love each win all five *Strangers In Paradise* trade paperbacks: *The Collected SIP, Vol. One*, *SIP: I Dream of You*, *SIP: It's A Good Life*, *SIP: Love Me Tender* and *SIP: Immortal Enemies* all signed by Terry Moore, plus a Strangers In Paradise T-shirt.

Okay all you wannabe matchmakers, HERE'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO to win—you have to draw Francine's husband! In case you're not in the loop, Francine's husband has yet to appear in the comic. So her fate lies in your hands. You can make her husband look like anyone you want. He could look like you, your friend, or maybe Brad Pitt. You decide. Draw him and send it in!

We'll choose the most creative and cool-looking entries as the winners. And not only will you win those great prizes, you'll see your entry in an upcoming issue of this very magazine!

Keep these things in mind as you start drawing: Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" X 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat. Also be sure to include two photos of yourself with the entry. Each photo (no Polaroids, please) should include your full name, date of birth, telephone number and address on the back.

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY ABSTRACT STUDIO AND LOVEBIRDS EVERYWHERE!

MATRIMONIAL LAW

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Abstract Studio, their immediate families and Carmen Electra. Geez, lady–if the best you can do is that human petri dish Dennis Rodman with *your* bazoobies, then you deserve him. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "We're Having A Wedding!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries and all rights thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by May 28, 1999.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Can you feel the love? Bet Dennis Rodman sure can. Winners will be notified no later than July 2, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about June 11, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after June 11, 1999, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "We're Having A Wedding!" Art Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and photos and put it all in an envelope. Send it to:

"We're Having a Wedding!" Art Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"We're Having A Wedding!" Art Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE MAY 28, 1999!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-mail address _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?

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Experience Dawn's thoughts and images in this brand-new, incredible story (only available for a limited time) when you fill out the order form, enclose three U.S. dollars and mail it in.

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- Art by Joseph Michael Linsner, Mark Crilley, Jill Thompson, Kevin J. Taylor and more!
- Super-limited!

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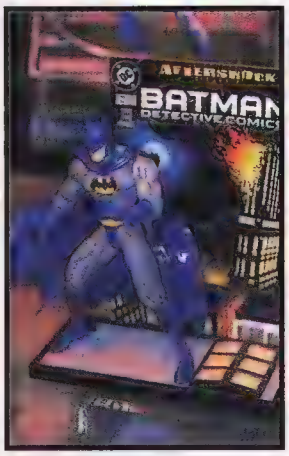
No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. With this coupon, you can order two comics. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00 per copy, other foreign orders remit $6.00 per copy. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight-to-12 weeks from date of expiration for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by June 25, 1999.

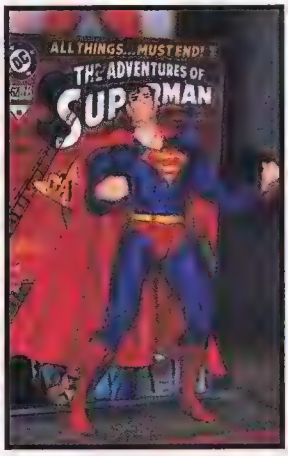
THIS OFFER EXPIRES JUNE 25, 1999

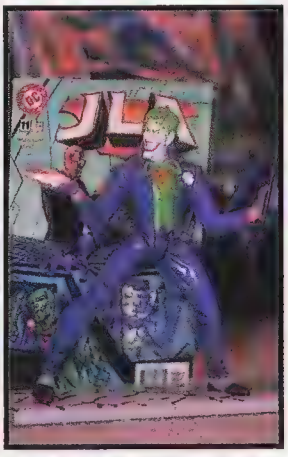
A BIG WAD O' TOY FAIR

It's like a little piece of heaven for toy fans.

It's the **American International Toy Fair**, a gathering of toy industry folks in New York City where a year's worth of toys are unveiled and showcased for the public. Every year, there's tons of hot toys and every year *Wizard* is there to bring back tons of pics of the latest happenings in the world of action figures. What's gonna be the hottest superhero figure? Who's got the sexiest bad girl toys? When's all this cool stuff gonna be in fans' hands? Read on, buckaroo!





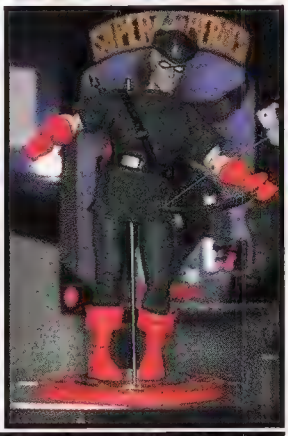


DC HEROES (7 INCH)

Holy Wonderbra, Batman! Hasbro's sure to please DC fans with its new line of 7-inch versions of some of DC's biggest heroes and villains. And when we say big, we mean it—check out this first assortment of figures: **Superman**, **Batman**, the **Joker**, **Shazam**, Superman Blue and "Knightfall" Batman. Each toy includes a base with a miniature comic cover and has multiple points of articulation.

DC HEROES (9 INCH)

As if things couldn't be better for DC fans, Hasbro will also release 9-inch Mego-style figures for Silver Age DC heroes. First up are figures for **Green Arrow**, **Green Lantern** and **Aquaman**, each with cloth costumes and a damn-near a gajillion points of articulation (well...more like somewhere between 12 and 16).



SIZE MATTERS From left to right: 7-inch Batman, Superman, Joker and Shazam. Bottom: Get big with 9 inches of Green Lantern and Green Arrow.

BLDGS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI; ALL TOY PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

Far beyond Batman, a sweet Samaritan and mystery abounds!

DARKCHYLDE

Randy Queen's **Darkchylde** becomes the latest hot-babe comic series to fall under the talented sculpting tools of Clayburn Moore and Moore Action Collectibles. MAC will offer up a figure of Ariel (sportin' some big-ass wings) and a totally gross-lookin' figure of Pennance. Eww!

MISERY DATE Teen queen Ariel Chylde comes with demon wings, talons and fake i.d.

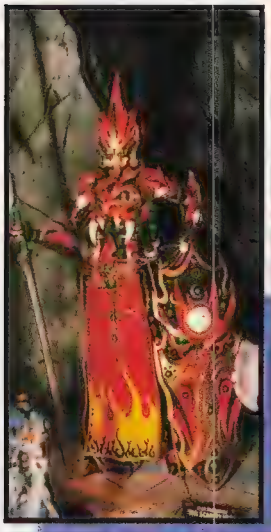
SPAWN DARK AGES II

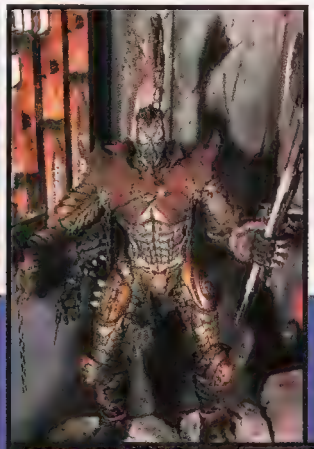
Just in time to make the summer a little spookier, McFarlane Toys will release the 14th series of **Spawn** figures, subtitled Dark Ages II. Based on characters from *Spawn: The Dark Ages*, the latest monthly Spawn comic, this line will include the Scarlet Edge, the Necromancer, Iguanus and Tuskadon, Viper King, Tormentor and Spawn the Black Heart. And, by the end of the year, be sure to check out Techno Spawn, a line that pairs Spawny-guy with some kooky mechanical animals.

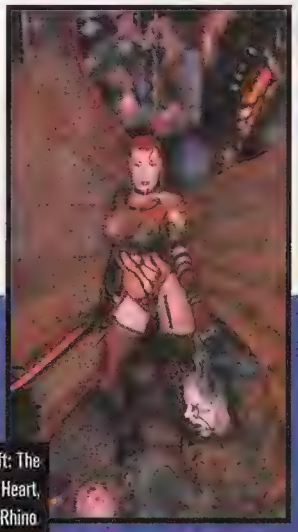
THE TENTH

Tony Daniels' **The Tenth**, full of big honkin' monsters and sexy wimmen, looks to have the ingredients for a sure-fire hit from the gang at ReSaurus. Daniels' popular Image series gets the toy treatment in what will probably the most huge action figures released this year. These figures will be offered as two-packs this summer, with Esperanza and the Tenth, Mystacina and the Grave and Adrenalynn and Lastic making up the first wave.

PERFECT 10 Teeny-tiny Esperanza and her hulking pal the Tenth come packaged together. Ah, true love.



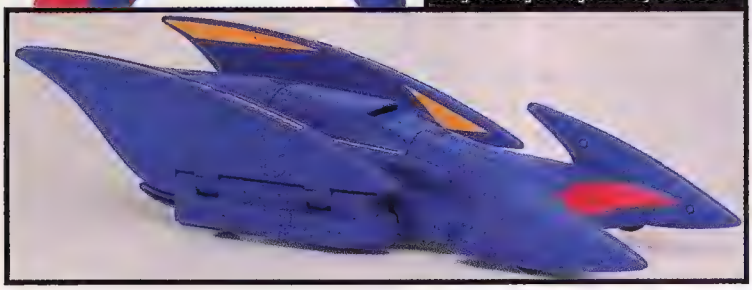




TODD'S AND ENDS Clockwise from top left: The Scarlet Edge, Tormentor, Spawn the Black Heart, the Necromancer, the Viper King, Gorilla and Rhino

BATMAN BEYOND

Batman's latest foray into the world of Saturday morning cartoons is a bona fide hit, so be sure to grab Hasbro's new **Batman Beyond** toy line. Fans can choose from eight new figures, including Batman in various crimefightin' outfits and one of the Jokerz gang members. There's also a sleek new Batmobile on the way, as well as a figure for Blight, the show's brand-new baddie.



FUTURE PRESENT This "space-age" Batman can go cruising in a high-tech toy Batmobile.

CHAOS! COMICS

Building on the runaway success of its debut action-figure line, Moore Action Collectibles will release another set of toys based on the world of Chaos! Comics. Classic bad-girl **Lady Death** makes another appearance, this time in full armor, as well as Cremator, who is decked out in a cool...um, head rag.

BAT-DEATH? Be very afraid if Lady Death wants to adopt small boys to serve as her crimefighting companion.

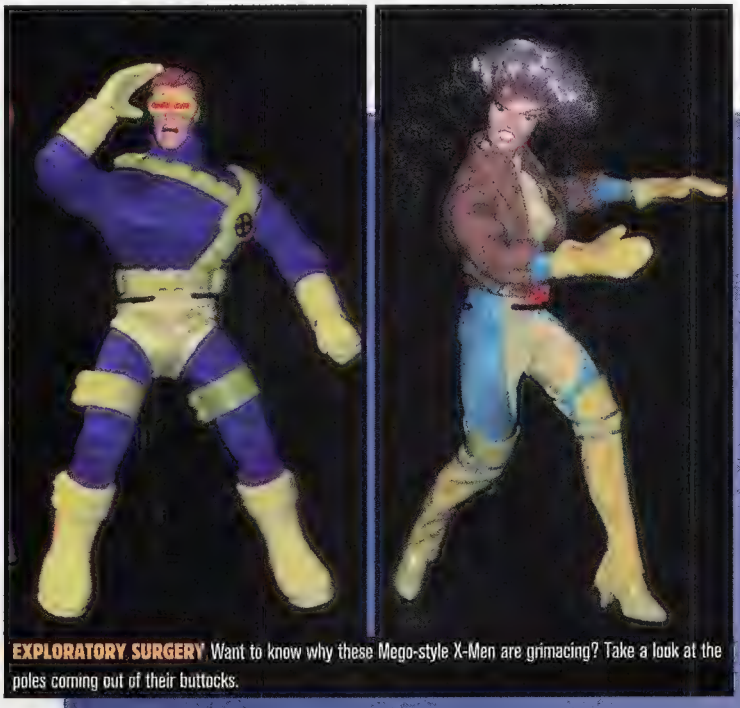
ASTRO CITY

Toy Vault's **Astro City** action figures should be in stores right now, but Flatt World will also be producing collector versions of characters from Kurt Busiek's Comic-book series. Sculpted by Charlee Flatt, these Mego-style figures will include Samaritan and the Hanged Man. Look for 'em this summer.

GOOD SAMARITAN Sure, ma'am. I'll help get your cat out of the tree. That'll be $10.

X-MEN FAMOUS COVERS

Not to be left out, there's more Mego-style fun from Toy Biz later this summer. The **X-Men** make up the next assortment of Famous Covers figures, which includes **Cyclops**, **Magneto**, **Nightcrawler** and **Rogue**. As with previous Covers figures, the X-Men will feature cloth costumes and super-poseable bodies. What more could you want in an action figure?



EXPLORATORY SURGERY Want to know why these Mego-style X-Men are grimacing? Take a look at the poles coming out of their buttocks.

MEN IN TIGHTS Mystery Men Captain Amazing (left) and Mr. Furious.

MYSTERY MEN

Ever think you'd see action figures of Bob Burden's **Mystery Men**? Well, just wait until this summer when the gang of misfit heroes hits the big screen in a flick starring **Ben Stiller**, **Greg Kinnear** and **Janeane Garofalo**. Playing Mantis has a line of Mystery Men action figures planned which feature realistic likenesses and special features such as sound chips, light-up features and interlocking bases.

ToyFare *Assistant Editor Tom Palmer went to Toy Fair a boy and came back a little girl. With more action accessories.*

HOMEMADE HERO OF THE MONTH

THE BEST OF FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

MORBIUS

Jim Maddox, Adairsville, Ga.

Jim made this super-cool version of Spider-Man supporting cast member Morbius totally from scratch. No leftover action figure parts, no moldy lunch meat, just a hunk o' Super Sculpey and a lot of hard work.

As the winner of our "Homemade Heroes" contest this month, Jim walks away with a keen, limited-edition 6-inch sculpture of Gabrielle from "Xena: Warrior Princess." Thank the good people at Creative License for this prize.

Sponsored by Creative License.

CREATIVE LICENSE

HEY! Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

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stuff

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By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

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Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Matter-Eater Lad's TV Dinners, Freefall's Parachute Kits or Shazam's Canned Hams, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies. In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

SEVEN DWARFS Can you figure out which one of these JSA PVCs is "Dopey"?

LONG-AWAITED JUSTICE

Hold America's first superteam in your hands! The Justice Society of America PVC set ($39.95) consists of seven figures, is limited to 10,000 units and will be available September 15—start saving now. Sandman, Red Tornado, Wildcat, Dr. Mid-Nite, Johnny Thunder (with Thunderbolt), Starman and Hourman measure 3 3/8 inches to 4 inches tall, stand on antiqued, silver-painted bases, and come packaged in a four-color window box.

STAR SCULPTURE

The ugly mug of the infamous Tusken Raider from "Star Wars" has been captured in a cold-cast porcelain sculpture from Legends in 3 Dimensions. The Star Wars Tusken Raider Bust ($179) stands 10 inches tall and comes with its edition number hand-etched into the base. It comes in a full-color box with art by Star Wars novel cover artist Drew Struzan and a certificate of authenticity. Limited to 2,500 editions, it's available now.

MY LIFE IS PAIN Is that a WWF reject? Nay! It's that pesky Tusken Raider Bust!

YOU RANG? Replica or no, how the heck did Batman halt criminals with a BRIGHT GRAY Batarang?

HOLY BATARANGS, BATMAN!

DC Comics brings fanboys' dreams to life this month with the Batarang prop ($149.95), a replica of the Dark Knight's greatest weapon! The Batarang has been recreated in solid pewter and comes mounted on an attached, bat-shaped base. Limited to 2,000 pieces, the Batarang measures 10 inches across and comes with a certificate of authenticity. Please note that this is intended for display only and is not for children (i.e., don't throw it at anybody).

POCKET BEANIES

Hasbro presents the latest in the Pokémon craze with the Pokémon Beanie Plushes ($3.75 each)—cute li'l creatures filled with beanie goodness. You'll find five of your favorite critters (including Meowth, Pikachu, Squirtle and Charmander) this month.

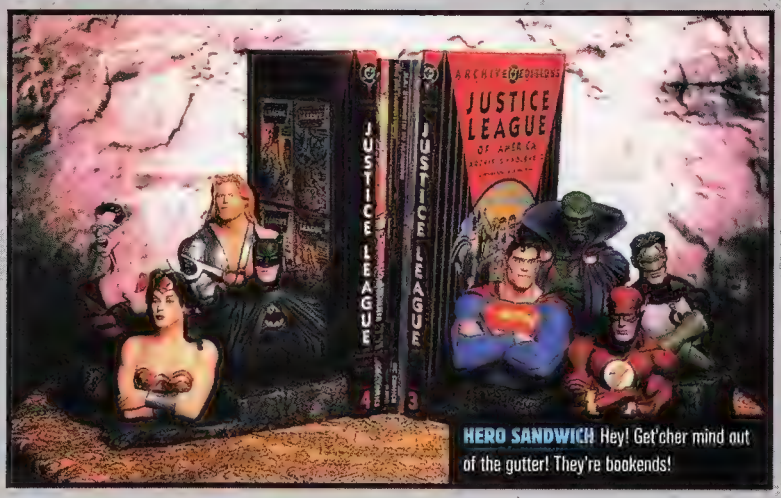
CHOKE HOLD Betcha the Meowth (top) Pokémon Beanie eats the others 'fore dawn.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

JUSTICE, BOOKENDED!

This July, look for the world's greatest superheroes to join forces to hold your books together when DC Comics presents the JLA Bookends ($295). Eight busts of Earth's mightiest do-gooders (four on each side) grace these bookends: Superman, Batman, Flash, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, Martian Manhunter, and Plastic Man. These hand-painted, cold-cast porcelain bookends are designed and sculpted by William Paquet and are limited to 2,000 pieces.



HERO SANDWICH Hey! Get'cher mind out of the gutter! They're bookends!

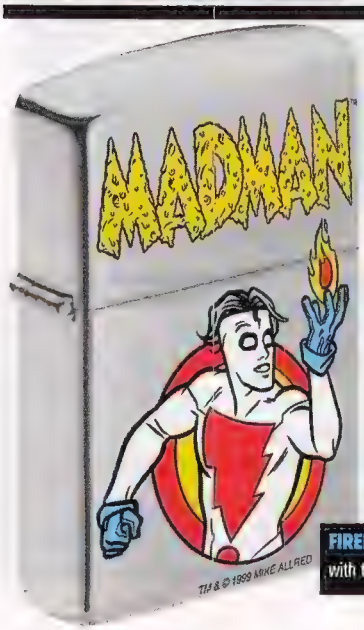
SIRIUS BREASTAGE Celebrate 10 big, honkin' years with the Dawn Anniversary Print.

GODDESS PRINTED

To celebrate 10 years of Joseph Michael Linsner's Dawn, Sirius presents the Dawn: 10th Anniversary Print ($75). Painted by Linsner, this full-color print measures 16" X 20", comes on museum-quality paper, and is signed and numbered. Limited to 1,500 editions, it comes shipped flat and ready for display this month.

RUMBLIN' BEANIES

Racing Champions and World Championship Wrestling (WCW) present the WCW Nitros Bears and Wolves Beanbag Collectibles ($5.99 each). These 8-inch plush beanbags feature nine different WCW/nWo personalities and teams. You'll find bears for Goldberg, Hollywood Hogan, Diamond Dallas Page, "Macho Man" Randy Savage, nWo's Black/White, and the Nitro girls. You'll also find wolves for Sting, Kevin Nash, and nWo's Red/Black. Keep an eye out for gold-stitched versions of Goldberg, Sting, Kevin Nash, DDP, and Macho Man, which will be released at the same price, but in very limited quantities (a ratio of 1:96 pieces produced). All of these cute cuddlies will be available this spring. Oh, yeeeeeeah!



IT'S A MAD, MAD LIGHTER

Dark Horse Comics brings you the world's snazziest superhero in his coolest form ever: the Madman Zippo Lighter ($29.95). This four-color genuine Zippo lighter features a design by creator Mike Allred on a polished chrome lighter. Look for it in stores this month.

FIREMAN Light birthday candles everywhere with this snappy Madman zippo.

SPITTING IMAGE Hey, the Goldberg Nitro Bear! Notice the resemblence?

PLANETARY HEADGEAR

WildStorm helps you celebrate Warren Ellis' comic *Planetary* with the new Planetary Logo Cap ($18.95). The 100 percent cotton cap with a tan, suede bill features the Planetary logo on a six-panel design. It should be available this month.

HAT HEAD Look cool and hide balding heads everywhere by wearin' this stylin' Planetary cap.

ANGELIC POSTER

It's the Angela: Prey for the Hunter Poster, it's painted by Jon J Muth and it's available right now. Todd McFarlane Productions presents an all-new painting of heaven's greatest hunter, Angela, in a 22" X 34" poster ($5.95).

BOOTY CALL It either really sucks to be Jabba's brother in this Angela poster...or it's friggin' great.

USE THE PEZ, LUKE

If you loved Pez candy as a kid, well, you still might, because Pez hasn't changed much. But Pez is releasing Star Wars Pez Wave 2 (95 cents each), four new Pez dispensers featuring characters from the original Star Wars trilogy. You'll find Pez dispensers of Luke (with X-Wing helmet), Leia, Boba Fett, and an (androgynous?) Ewok. Look for them in stores everywhere right now.

PEZ HEADS Eat your body weight of Star Wars Pez.

SPAWNY CARDS

Inkworks helps you reference all those great Todd McFarlane toys with the premiere edition of Spawn: The Toy Files premium trading cards ($1.99 per pack). The basic set consists of 90 cards which feature every key toy in the Spawn family; there are also three levels of bonus cards. The Top Secret Toy Files (1:11 packs) consist of nine foil cards with rarely seen design sketches; the Double Feature Rarities (1:27 packs) consist of four double-front cards with the more valuable and scarce toys on them, and Blue Spawn (1:108 packs) is one of the rarest Spawn toys out there on its own exclusive card. You'll also find randomly inserted autographed cards by Todd himself. Look for them in stores right now.

DAMNED CARDS If you find the rare Blue Spawn card, you win Todd's armpit hair.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

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#1912 GLOVE $7.95

COLORFUL ROCKS

Glowing rocks cause humorous results! Make super-men dance! Kill plant life! Set of six, all different colors! WARNING: Constant use may cause cancer and serious birth defects in pregnant women.
#9824 FUNKY ROCKS . $2.99

video STUFF

By Matthew Danish

Video killed the radio star, but who's complaining? Certainly not us. Welcome to "Video Stuff," a column where we let loose with news, previews, reviews and super-secret codes for the hottest, most spanktacular console and PC games around. Fire up the controllers...it's video game time.

WOODS DOES 'SOUTH PARK'

Dude, this kicks ass. Electronic Arts recently pulled approximately 100,000 copies of its sports simulation *Tiger Woods Golf '99* from store shelves. The PlayStation game was recalled after someone put the game's compact disc into a PC drive and the system booted up the infamous "South Park: The Spirit of Christmas" short. The short, which shows a battle between Jesus and Santa Claus—and features a lot of cursing—was the precursor to the hit "South Park" animated show on Comedy Central. The game has since become a collector's item, with people offering to buy copies for $100 on Internet newsgroups.

EA representatives said they don't know how or why this possibly offensive material was inserted onto the disc. The company is investigating, and encourages stores or people who have bought the game to return their copies.

CHEESY PUNKS The kids from "South Park" were found on copies of *Tiger Woods Golf*.

PARAPPA ROCKS...

The stuff that this dog drops, you just can't stop: The cute puppy/rapper PaRappa, star of Sony's hit PlayStation game *PaRappa The Rapper*, is scheduled to return to video game glory. The sequel to his quirky video game debut is titled *Unjammer Lami* and will debut in Japan in March.

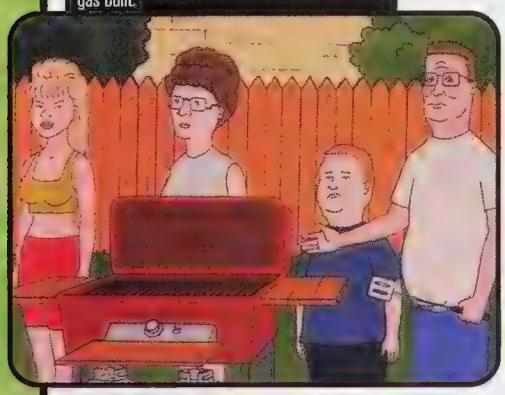
Little is known about *Lami*, but it does star PaRappa, a female lamb rock star named Lami and other characters from *PaRappa*. The storyline involves Lami's band, Milk Can, and rock music. There's no American release date, Sony said, but the game will have a two-player cooperative mode.

KING OF VIDEO GAMES

It's rumored that the Hill family (Hank, Peggy, Bobby and LuAnn), the stars of Fox's popular animated show "King of the Hill," might be climbing into their own video game.

While it's logical to assume that the game might be made by Fox Interactive, any "King of the Hill" product is more likely to be produced by GT Interactive—especially considering the cozy relationship between the show's creator Mike Judge and GT Interactive, producers of games based on Judge's other show, "Beavis and Butt-head."

PROPANE ACCESSORIES Hank Hill and his family may be part of the video game that gas built.



KISS THIS!

Grizzled rock band KISS, known for their high decibel assault, has struck gold with the comic *KISS: The Psycho Circus*. Now, the fearsome foursome will star in their own video game.

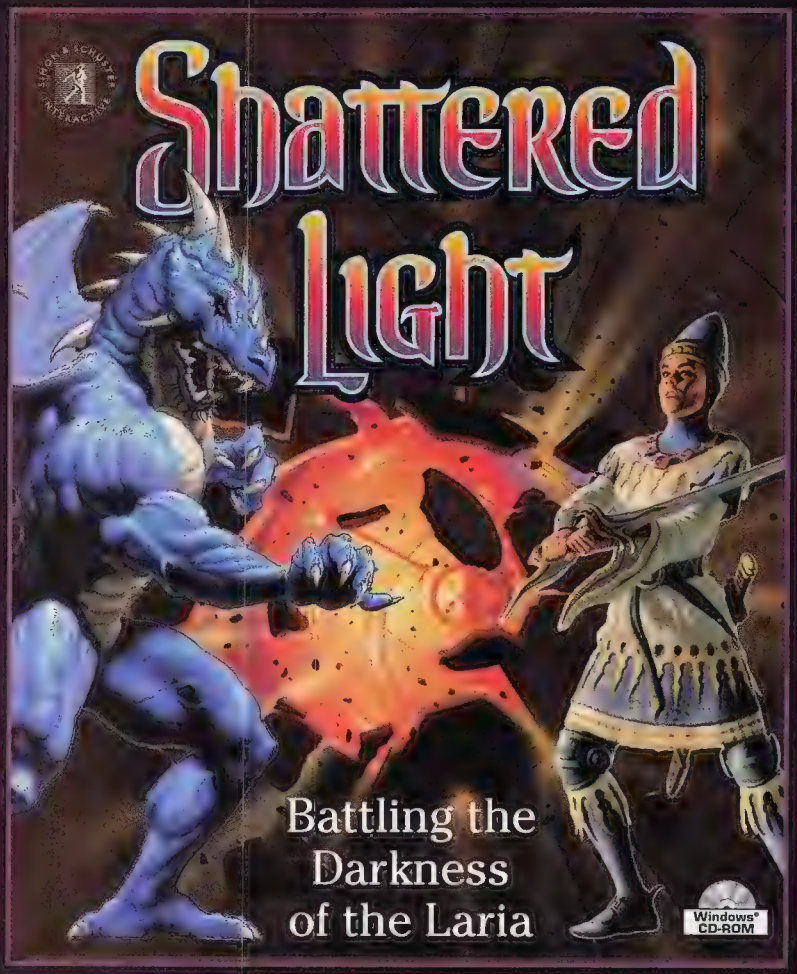
Set for release on PCs sometime before the millennium, this game will reportedly be a 3-D action title. The game is being created by Take-Two Interactive, Gathering of Developers and Bloodshot Entertainment. The game will likely feature backgrounds pulled directly from Todd McFarlane Productions' *Psycho Circus* and a soundtrack by the one and only KISS. ■

UP AHEAD

Save the trees, reave some souls, 'Do U.' with Beavis and Butt-head and more, more, more!!!

A World of Your Own Making

Shattered Light is the first RPG to deliver near limitless expansion and modification features. With its revolutionary world-modifier engine, Shattered Light allows the player to expand the fantasy world with more than 4,000 terrain tiles.



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- Skills
- Items
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Shattered Light, the original paperback fantasy series, is simultaneously available from Pocket Books. Look for the first two editions—DARK LIGHT and RUBY FLAMES—wherever paperbacks are sold.

A Catware Product

BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD DO U.

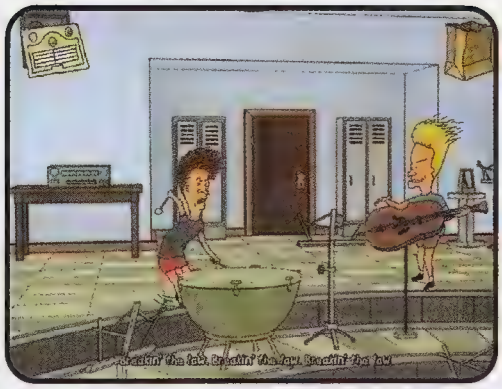
MANUFACTURER: GT Interactive
PLATFORM: PC
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99, available now

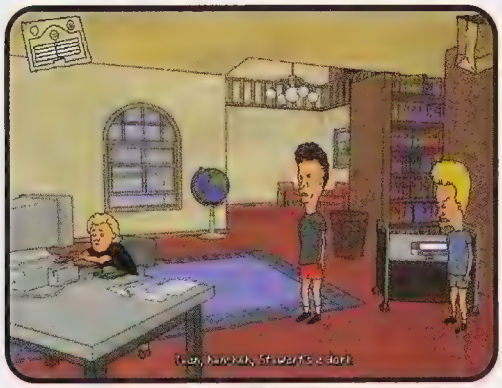
"Uhhhhhh...it's, like...college rules, or something." At least that's what Butt-head, the disenfranchised, nostril-flared voice of Generation X, thinks of higher learning. How did he and his blond-coifed partner in crime, Beavis, gain entry into a university, you ask? Well, in GT Interactive's graphic adventure *Beavis and Butt-head Do U.*, the chaos-bringing duo accompany their mild-mannered teacher, Mr. Van Driessen, on a class trip to Highland State University in hopes of preparing for the college experience. And what an experience it is.

It seems that the inimitable pair must procure the signatures of eight professors by proving their merit in different collegiate subjects such as communications, music, and biology. Their reward? An invitation to a college party, where they'll meet chicks and...heh heh...score.

Do U.'s gameplay is largely puzzle-oriented; players must guide the bumbling teens across Highland U.'s impressive campus, gathering and trading useful items to complete the quest. The puzzles very nearly achieve that delicate balance between the obvious and the impossible, though in some cases they require clairvoyance to complete. Interspersed amid these scenes are a few action sequences, including a James Bond-like shootout, the conclusion of which will have fans howling. ■ DAN DiGIACOMO

TRY IT... If you like nachos, the idea of scoring with chicks, or any of the *King's Quest* adventures, get some TP and go nuts with *Beavis and Butt-head Do U.*





ASSMUNCH How much higher can education get? Find out with *Beavis and Butt-head Do U.*

LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

MANUFACTURER: Eidos Interactive
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99, available now

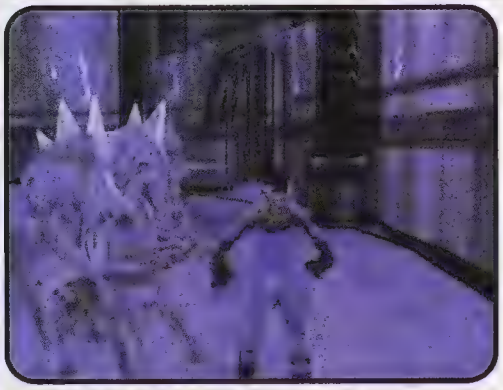
Life's not easy when you're dead. Or undead, for that matter. Just ask Raziel, one of Kain the vampire king's fallen lieutenants, whose story is told in the upcoming *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*, a follow-up to 1997's *Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen*.

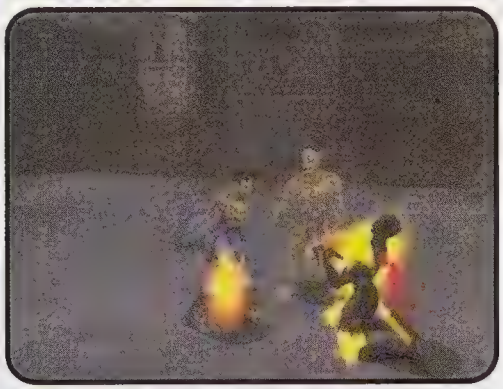
Soul Reaver is set a millennium after its predecessor, in a world where Kain, now a Dark God, has appointed six lieutenants to transform humanity into a legion of vampire followers. All was cake and pie until Raziel developed a pair of nifty wings before his master did. Kain, angered at being shown up, slashed Raziel to bits and cast him into a bottomless vortex.

Players take the part of the fallen Raziel, cutting through 20 different enemies and 11 bosses in a vast world before taking on Kain himself. Gameplay is similar to that of *Tomb Raider*, with Raziel running, jumping and gliding on tattered wings in search of new souls as he wanders the Earth like...umm...Kain. And what a graphically lush—and disturbing—world it is; it's split into two realms: the material and the spectral. This concept plays heavily in *Soul Reaver*, as gamers will learn that changes in one world often affect the other, and that both worlds are populated by very different characters. Players must also cast spells and feed on souls to sustain Raziel's life.

With an impressive graphics engine, spooky music and a hip, goth storyline, *Soul Reaver* is sure to impress a legion of fans, both living and undead. ■ DAN DiGIACOMO

TRY IT... Dig *Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen*, *Castlevania* or *MediEvil*? Then drain your wallet dry to get *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*.





SOUL MAN Undead hero Raziel flies on tattered wings while hideous beasts seek to fry his fruit salad.

MORE→

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LEGEND OF LEGAIA

MANUFACTURER: Sony Computer Entertainment
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.95, available now

Get that green thumb jamming for *Legend of Legaia*, a pulpy 3-D roleplaying game (RPG) where players are challenged to save a world or bite the black dog.

Legaia is an interesting, if a bit standard, PlayStation RPG in which the somewhat blocky, polygonal protagonist stomps through various villages, exchanging banter with the citizens, collecting weapons and spells. Players select one of three human characters—Vahn, Noa or Gala (each with special skills, strengths and weaknesses)—and embark on a quest to save humanity from the mysterious mist, an evil force which mutates the villagers with which it comes in contact. Players must find magic "Genesis Trees" which cause the mist to evaporate and returns the villagers to human form.

The second goal of the game is to find the Ra-Serv, a statue-like, winged creature that can be transformed into a companion and worn by the game's characters. The Ra-Serv heightens Vahn's, Noa's or Gala's fighting ability by spicing up their various attacks.

TRY IT... If you like *Brave Fencer Musashi*, *Breath of Fire* or *Pokémon*, you'll love *Legend of Legaia*.

While *Legaia's* exploration mode serves up a host of challenges, the game's best feature is its battle mode. Once a player chooses his character's weapon, he then faces evil beasts in a fighting-game-style contest (like *Street Fighter*). Rather than turn-based moves, the characters claw it out with the direction pad, determining high, low or middle attacks in real time with some great, eye-bulging graphics. This, more than anything else, puts a whole new branch on a seemingly old oak. ■

LEGENDARY Legend of Legaia may look like an RPG, but its battles are straight out of a fighting game.

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

CHEATSHEET

SOUTHERN COMFORTS

Kick ass, dude! Want to get the most out of your *South Park* game for the Nintendo 64? Input these cheats in the game's cheat menu and boost your authoritah immensely:

- **JUMP TO ANOTHER LEVEL**
  Type in "Theearthmoved"
- **ALL WEAPONS**
  Type in "Fatknacker"
- **BIG HEAD MODE**
  Type in "Meganoggin"
- **ALL CHARACTERS IN MULTI-PLAYER MODE**
  Type in "Omgtkkyb"
- **GOD MODE**
  Type in "Assman"
- **UNLIMITED AMMO**
  Type in "Fatterknacker"

'DARKSTALKER' DELIGHTS

Use these cool codes to get the most out of *Darkstalkers 3* for the PlayStation.

PLAY AS SHADOW

- Go to the character select screen.
- Highlight the box with the question mark and press "select" five times.
- Press any button on the controller.

PLAY AS OBORO

- Go to the character select screen.
- Highlight Bishamon.
- Hold "select," then press any button on the controller.

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Goldin's museum of video games is a downright good site with reviews of games for Sega's Dreamcast system.

www.classicgaming.com/tmk/tmk.shtml

The Mushroom Kingdom is a great site to learn all about the ne'er-do-well video game plumber, Mario. ■

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TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1 BATMAN

What makes a Dark Knight so cool? Try the "No Man's Land" year-long story arc pretty much the first time there. Say, how do you think the Batman of the 1990s would have handled a post-earthquake Gotham City practically cut off from the rest of the United States and turned into a lawless hell on Earth? He'd probably have clocked a couple thousand pounds before heading stunned by a rampaging mob and having the flesh ripped from his bones. My, how the times have changed. Those days he could fight off any rampaging mob you threw at him armed with a rock and a piece of string or something. He's kinda MacGyver-ish that way.

2 WOLVERINE

So Wolverine might be getting his adamantium back. Or he might not. You never know. The thing about Wolverine, y'see, is that with a healing factor, martial arts skills, an adamantium skeleton and claws which can cut through just about anything, he's pretty big-ass unstoppable. Not to mention that, according to current Marvel continuity, he could be anywhere from 30 to 150 years old. What's next? A muscle hatchet in his ass? Laser beams that shoot from his ears? But there isn't a thing as being too powerful. Wolverine doesn't need all that stuff. Although, maybe if he had a Jaguar flight mag...

3 SPAWN

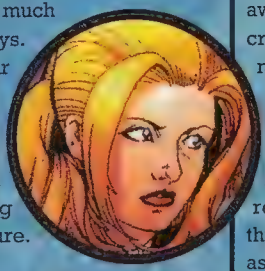
Spawn has sparkling green eyes, kind of like David Hasselhoff. Unlike David Hasselhoff, Spawn doesn't get to hop around the beach with voluptuous dark lifeguards, downing pina coladas and rescuing voluptuous drowning chicks all day. Spawn pretty much hangs in the alley with the bums and their pokes. If Spawn ever caught David Hasselhoff taking a shortcut through his alley, he'd probably rip Hasselhoff's heart out of his chest and put in a good word for him. Maybe send his ass home and head for the beach to hang with the voluptuous chicks. Wouldn't you?

4 WITCHBLADE

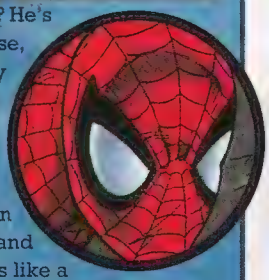
Aha, Witchy-poo. Where would this list be without you? Say, what do you think makes Sara Pezzini so darn popular? Well, if there was a guy who looked like the Kingpin who ran around naked covered only in some kind of queer tongue, his comic book would sell about eight copies. And we don't mean most the eight readers shelling out cash for a book about a big, fat sweaty, naked guy infested with a creepy tongue. Hey, come to think of it, the staff of *Wizard* resembles that comic book pretty closely! Except the naked part. Thank God. That's one adjectival that's off limits around here.

5 BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Every day of our lives, we get down on our knees and praise the Lord for the women's lib movement. Without it, we wouldn't have cute chicks whacking the snot out of vampires left and right. And that's pretty much all that's keeping us going these days. That and the dream that someday our little corner of the world, Congers, N.Y., will get a Koo Koo Roo restaurant. It just sounds funny. Try saying it! Koo Koo Roo! Hee hee. Anyhow, Buffy just keeps on steamrolling along thanks to all her mainstream exposure. Plus she's kind of a cutie.



6 SPIDER-MAN



What's left to say about Spider-Man? He's the bestest superhero ever. Of course, things could have gone horribly awry back in the early days had his creators Stan Lee and Steve Ditko made even one poor decision. Like, if Spidey could fly. Or if his webbing didn't dissolve after an hour. Or if Peter Parker was fat and shirtless a lot. Or if he spun webs like a real spider—out of his ass. Any one of these could have thwarted Spider-Man's rise to popularity. Especially that ass one.

7 FATHOM

Being an underwater superheroine is fine and dandy, but if Fathom had to get a job in the real world, her powers wouldn't be all that useful. Of course, she'd be the hottest li'l plumber ever! Heck, if we could look up Fathom in the *Yellow Pages* every time the toilet overflowed, we'd be flushing washcloths down the crapper every chance we had. Or beach towels. Whatever it took. Are we ashamed of ourselves? Oh yeah. But it's still a good plan, dammit.

8 MAGNETO

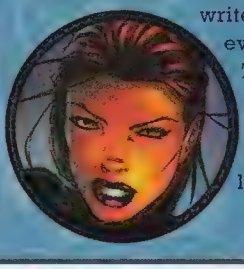
He's back, baby! And he's a mondo-gigantic baddie with all sorts of dastardly plans! On the other hand, that wussy Joseph guy is still hanging around. We hate that guy. He's a grim reminder that Magneto hasn't always been around to rip adamantium out of skeletons, launch the X-Men into orbit for the hell of it and generally stomp the crap out of all who oppose him. We love Magneto. We'd act just like him, if we worked out more than once a year.

9 DAREDEVIL

Careful, kids. Just because Grandma has cataracts doesn't mean she spends her nights running around the rooftops in red longjohns fighting crime with her enhanced senses. That only works for one vision-impaired do-gooder in these parts, and that's Daredevil, the Man Without Fear, still flying high from that Kevin Smith-related *Daredevil* sales boost. Grandma might be without fear too, but take it easy on the old gal. She'd rather bake cookies than knock the stuffing out of crooks. Mmm...cookies.

10 LARA CROFT

Every day of our lives, we get down on our knees and praise the Lord for the women's lib movement. Without it, we wouldn't have cute chicks whacking the snot out of monkeys left and right. Yeah, we know this is the same damn write-up as #5 above, but we mean every word. Each time Croft from *Tomb Raider* has popped up with her buddy Witchblade in the ol' comix, sales have been through the friggin' roof. So when's Lara-loo gettin' her own series?



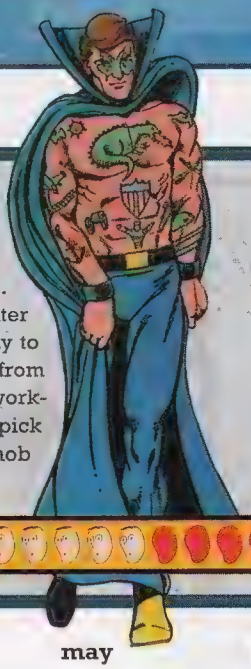
MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

THE TATTOOED MAN

Abel Tarrant was a petty crook whose luck changed during a shootout at a chemical plant. All your best supervillain origins happen that way, don't they?

Anyhow, Tarrant spilled some chemicals on him that took the shape of a bomb. He really, really wished it WAS a bomb, and then POOF!, a bomb popped out! He later used the chemicals to tattoo different shapes all over his body, and he was ready to conquer the world! Or at least he was ready to get a good-'n'-regular beatdown from Green Lantern every so often, as well as any other superhero looking for a quick workout before dinner. (Nothing like a nice, easy beatdown right before heading off to pick up Chinese food.) For the record, he was later offed by the dastardly Goldface mob for rippin' 'em off. Or maybe the mob just felt sorry for him. Either way.



MORTOMETER

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS:

CONTEST

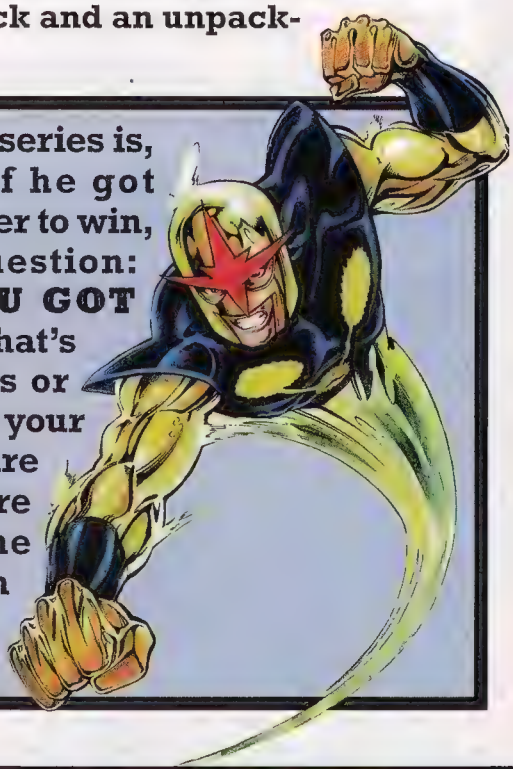
Star Light, Star Bright!

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One superstar wins an original *Nova* script signed by writer Erik Larsen, two pages of original *Nova* art signed by artist Joe Bennett, a copy of *Nova* #1 signed by Larsen and Bennett, a copy of the *New Warriors* trade paperback and an unpackaged Nova action figure.

SECOND PRIZE (10): Ten shining stars each win an original Nova sketch by Joe Bennett, a copy of *Nova* #1 signed by Erik Larsen and Bennett, a copy of the *New Warriors* trade paperback and an unpackaged Nova action figure.

Erik Larsen's take on the new *Nova* series is, "What would the reader do if he got superpowers tomorrow?" Well, in order to win, you have to answer that simple question: **WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU GOT SUPERPOWERS TOMORROW?** That's it. Answer that question in 50 words or less and send it in. We'll read through your essays and choose the ones we feel are the best as the winners. Just make sure you remember to be a hero with the powers and not a zero, because with great power comes great...well, you know the rest. Get writing!



MARVEL COMICS

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY MARVEL COMICS, THE BEST FRIEND A NEW WARRIOR COULD EVER HAVE!

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Fill this out, attach your entry and put it in an envelope. Send it to:

"Star Light, Star Bright!" Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

BRIGHT, SHINY LEGAL TEXT

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Marvel Comics, their immediate families and guys really named Rich Rider. While you may think it's cool to have the same name as a superhero, it's really kinda geeky. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Star Light, Star Bright!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries and all rights relating thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by May 28, 1999.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. *Wizard* is, however, responsible for lots of fart jokes and stup'd catch-phrases. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than July 2, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about June 11, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after June 11, 1999, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Star Light, Star Bright!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"Star Light, Star Bright!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE MAY 28, 1999!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-Mail Address _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY?

picks

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN APRIL

book of the month

THOR #12

MARVEL "War on Asgard," conclusion. Writer Dan Jurgens sets the scene: "Asgard has been conquered by the Dark Gods. Odin is powerless, Balder the Brave is near death, and when you see what happened to Volstagg the Voluminous, you won't believe your eyes." Sounds like a Thunder God to the rescue! Thor comes a-runnin' to Asgard with Hercules *and* a double-secret weapon, as all life on Asgard—and Earth—hangs in the balance! What more do ya want? This 48-pager with a wraparound cover comes at ya courtesy of Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson. **$2.99**

AKIKO #33

SIRIUS Spunky fifth-grader Akiko is stuck in rural Japan at an elderly blind woman's home. See, the spaceship 'Kiko and her space pals were on (trust us—this becomes normal in *Akiko*) ran outta gas. Now, rural Japan might *seem* like a good place for aliens to hide out, but it just happens to be the woman's 100th birthday, and a buncha TV reporters are on their way over. Oops. By Mark Crilley. **$2.50**

AUTHORITY #2

WILDSTORM/DC Yow! An army of terrorists has decimated Moscow. Their next target: London. And only the Authority, an untested, ragtag superteam made up of the remnants of StormWatch, can stop 'em. By Englishmen Warren Ellis (who's probably twisted enough to WANT London destroyed), Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary (who both probably think Ellis is nuts enough to do it anyway). **$2.50**

AVENGERS #17

MARVEL If you're named the "Doomsday Man," you probably ain't gonna get too many dates. So you'll probably turn to antisocial activities like destroying cities and stuff. But when half the Avengers are in another dimension fighting the Wrecking Crew, it's time to call in...Photon and the Black Knight?? Great. We're all friggin' dead. Thanks a lot, Jerry Ordway and Al Gordon. **$1.99**

AVENGERS FOREVER #7 (OF 12)

MARVEL What's worse than being lost in New Jersey? How 'bout being lost in time and dancing like a puppet on the strings of Immortus? That's what Avengers Captain America, Giant-Man, the Wasp, Hawkeye, Yellowjacket, Captain Marvel and Songbird (Songbird? Yep, the former villain is an Avenger sometime in the future) face this issue. By Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern, Carlos Pacheco and Jesús Merino. **$2.99**

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Earthquake-devastated Gotham City is still in ruins, life there still sucks, and it's a long way till December to end the pain. (That's 'cause "No Man's Land" runs until then.) Anyhoo, manservant Alfred Pennyworth takes center stage in *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

#118, while an old man fights to protect his home from gangs in *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #86. Over in *Batman* #566, Superman puts in a guest appearance, and that ever-so-busy Alfred tells Batman a tale of the Dark Knight's father in *Detective Comics* #733. By more Bat-creators than ya can shake a Bat-can-opener at. **$1.99 each**

BATTLE CHASERS #6

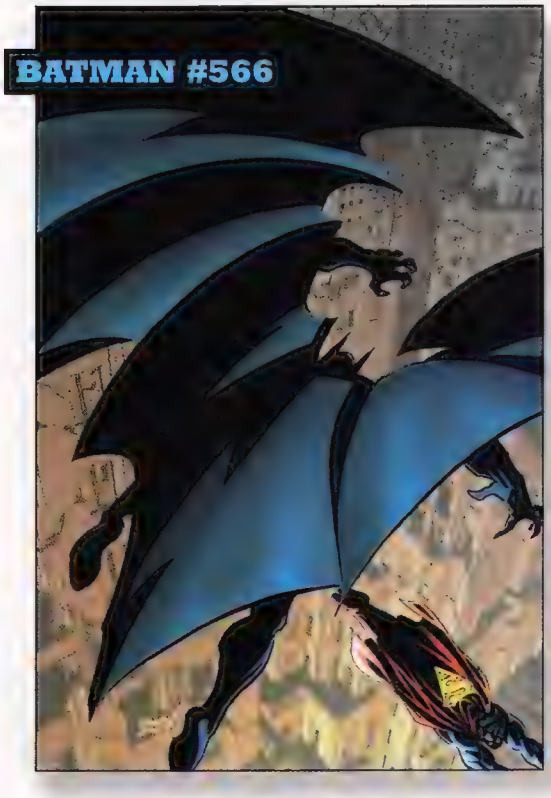
WILDSTORM/DC Okay, it's been six months since this book was originally scheduled to ship, and this is the third time we've written it up. But you can bet doughnuts to deutsche marks that if *Battle Chasers* #6—slated to give us the skinny on Gully's mighty power gauntlets and her missing father—actually makes it out, it'll be chock full of yummy goodness. Munier Sharrieff, Joe Madureira and Tom McWeeney promise. **$2.50**

BLACK WIDOW #1 (OF 3)

MARVEL There's a new super-spy femme fatale called the Black Widow in town! This one's younger than the original and a bit more of a risk-taker, but she *still* wears skintight leather all over. Mwwwrrooow! Oh, yeah—this new chick? Her first assignment is to terminate the old Black Widow. By Devin Grayson and J.G. Jones. **$3.50**

BOX OFFICE POISON KOLOR KARNIVAL #1

ANTARCTIC PRESS They musta been all out of C's at the letterer's shop, 'cause this sucker's a "Kolor Karnival." *Box Office Poison* hits the same technological stride achieved by TV in the mid-1960s, as a funkadelic tale of luckless Sherman the bookstore clerk is brought to you in Technicolor. Welcome to the'90s, *BOP*. By Alex Robinson. **MR. $2.99**



newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

ALAN MOORE'S AWESOME ADVENTURES #1 (Awesome) Follow British writer Alan Moore as he drinks tea, eats scones and combs his beard for...oops, sorry. This one's just a cool tale starring the superteam Youngblood. $2.50

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 1999 (Marvel) The Wingless Wizard pops in and threatens to blow up the world. For the 53rd time. $3.50

ATOMIC TOYBOX #1 (Image) Young Ken Logan gets a toy box that turns imagination into reality. Hmmm. Okay, let's all visualize world peace and naked women's tennis. $2.50

BATMAN: BOOK OF THE DEAD #1 (DC Comics) The world ends in 2012 unless Batman can stop it. He's getting an early start. $4.95

BATMAN: THE BOOK OF SHADOWS (DC Comics) The lonely and lovelorn of Gotham (along with a few assorted comic geeks) are the targets of a cult. Batman, nice guy that he is, wants to stop 'em. $5.95

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: SPIKE AND DRU (Dark Horse) The supporting characters from the hit series find themselves in Eastern Europe, where the water tastes funny and everyone's last name ends in "-clav." $2.95

DARKNESS/BATMAN (Top Cow/DC) Hitman and Darkness-dude Jackie Estacado blows into Gotham. And Batman's none too happy to see him. $5.95

DAWN: THE RETURN OF THE GODDESS #1 (Sirius) Mother goddess Dawn is back, and oooooh, is mommy pissed! Someone's been killing her followers. Bad move. $2.95

FATHOM SWIMSUIT SPECIAL #1 (Top Cow/Image) Homina homina homina! Aspen Matthews and friends get wet for this pinup special. Bring your own towel. $2.95

FLINCH #1 (Vertigo/DC) It's a new Vertigo horror anthology, so people will get jabbed in the eyes with needles and stuff. Non-British guy Jim Lee contributes a story. $2.50

GEN^{13}: GOING WEST (WildStorm/DC) The Gen^{13} gang ride out West and fanboys everywhere offer to buff the saddle sores off of Fairchild's butt. $2.50

GREEN LANTERN: FEAR ITSELF (DC Comics) Lanterns from three eras go digital in a computer-enhanced-art hardcover. $24.95

MONSTER FIGHTERS, INC. #1 (Image) Five monster-fightin' kids take on zombies, mutants, cyborgs and...a comic convention! AAAAGH! THE HORROR! $2.95

ROB #1 (Awesome) Hoo, boy. It's Rob Liefeld's tale of a young, idealistic cartoonist and his li'l fantasy world. Can you say "autobiography"? $2.50

SMILEY WHACKY WRESTLING SPECIAL (Chaos!) Everyone's favorite psychotic button gets slammed in this chair-swingin' one-shot. $2.95

STAR WARS: EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE (Dark Horse) It's the adaptation of the movie of the millennium, and no, they're not going to tell us anything more about it other than it's 112 pages for $12.95.

SUPERMAN: KING OF THE WORLD (DC Comics) Three months worth of Superman plots get wrapped up in this whopper of a one-shot. James Cameron and his pretentious beard do not appear. $4.95

DAREDEVIL #8

MARVEL "Guardian Devil," conclusion. It's the end of Kevin Smith's eight-issue run and the end of the line for Karen Page, as Daredevil bids farewell to his longtime gal-pal. "Matt Murdock will bury Karen Page and examine the motivations of our soon-to-be-revealed villain," Smith says. "It'll all tie in with our theme for this story arc, which is faith." Can readers have faith that Smith will be back on *DD* anytime soon? "That depends," he says. "If my boys are still around, I'll be back." By Smith and his boys, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.50**

GREEN LANTERN #113

DC COMICS What a sucky homecoming party! After spending the last few months in space—where you can't find good coffee no matter how hard ya try—GL Kyle Rayner is back on Earth! And he's just in time to encounter a brand-new enemy. Effigy's the name, evil is the game, and Kyle's wishin' they woulda just baked a cake. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Terry Austin. **$1.99**

HELLBLAZER #138

VERTIGO/DC Don't screw with John Constantine, Hellblazer. Seems some idiot killed his old girlfriend. Now this blue-collar mage is getting some revenge. "John has pulled his filthy scheme together," writer Warren Ellis says. "Although he doesn't know why yet, he knows *who* killed Isabelle. And now, John will do an almighty mischief to him. Constantine's back to being the old bastard we've all come to know, love and fear. This issue will be full of many disgusting things, all doled out in the mighty DC manner. It's what gets nipples hard in comic shops all over America." By the still-English Ellis, and fellow Englander John Higgins, who really hopes London will be saved in *Authority* #2. **MR. $2.50**

HITMAN #38

DC COMICS

Vampires suck! Just ask Tommy Monaghan, hitman for hire. Tommy was out-of-country for a while, and while he was gone, this li'l earthquake hit his hometown of Gotham City. That means zombies, ghouls, vampires and other various walking dead are infesting Tommy's neighborhood. Bring a shovel. By Irishmen Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Garry Leach, who might like London leveled. **$2.50**

HUMAN TARGET #3

VERTIGO/DC Christopher Chance has to have the worst job this side of a Port-a-John technician. He's the Human Target, a body double who stands in when a celebrity is about to be assassinated. But this time, someone's gunning for Chance himself. How's *that* for a twist? By Englander Peter Milligan, who really wants the Authority to pull through, and Edvin Biukovic. **MR. $2.95**

INHUMANS #8

MARVEL Dog days hit the Inhumans as we get a seldom-seen view of the hidden city of Attilan—a view about three feet off the ground. See the city through the eyes of Lockjaw, the Inhumans' teleporting dog. Fire hydrants take on a whole new significance. By expatriate Englishman (now living in jolly old Massachusetts) Paul Jenkins, who really doesn't give a rat's ass if the Authority saves London, and Jae Lee. **$2.99**

INVISIBLES #10

VERTIGO/DC We're 10 months from the end of life, the universe, and even Cheez Doodles as *The Invisibles* counts backward to #1. Invisibles operative Ragged Robin travels through time to her home in the future, and a disguised alien inches closer to gaining the British throne. Hey, he's *gotta* be better than Prince Charles, right? By the right good Brits Grant Morrison and Philip Bond, who live far enough away to be quite ambivalent about the whole London-destroyed bit. **MR. $2.95**

IRON MAN #17

MARVEL Grunge is dead. Seattle ain't far behind. "It's the finale to our two-part Fin Fang Foom story," co-writer Kurt Busiek sez. "Readers have been itching to see Iron Man cut loose and show just how powerful he is after what feels like an entire year getting the crap beat out of him." And after FFF's return from the dead is explained and the obligatory Iron-Man's-personal-life stuff is taken care of, Busiek promises "a no-holds-barred slamdown between Iron Man and a monster lizard. It gives Sean Chen a chance to cut loose with action, and will make the letterers at Comicraft use up all the Big Sound Effects, so they have to order out for more. It'll be fun." By Busiek, Roger Stern, Chen and Larry Stucker. **$1.99**

JLA #30

DC COMICS Today's JLA teams up with the 1940s-era JSA (Justice Society of America) to take on a fifth-dimension genie named "LKZ." Then UPS makes a delivery ASAP from the CIA, but it's strictly FYI, OK? By Scotsman Grant Morrison (still ambivalent), and Americans Howard Porter and John Dell, who will only save England's ass for nude photos of the Queen. **$1.99**

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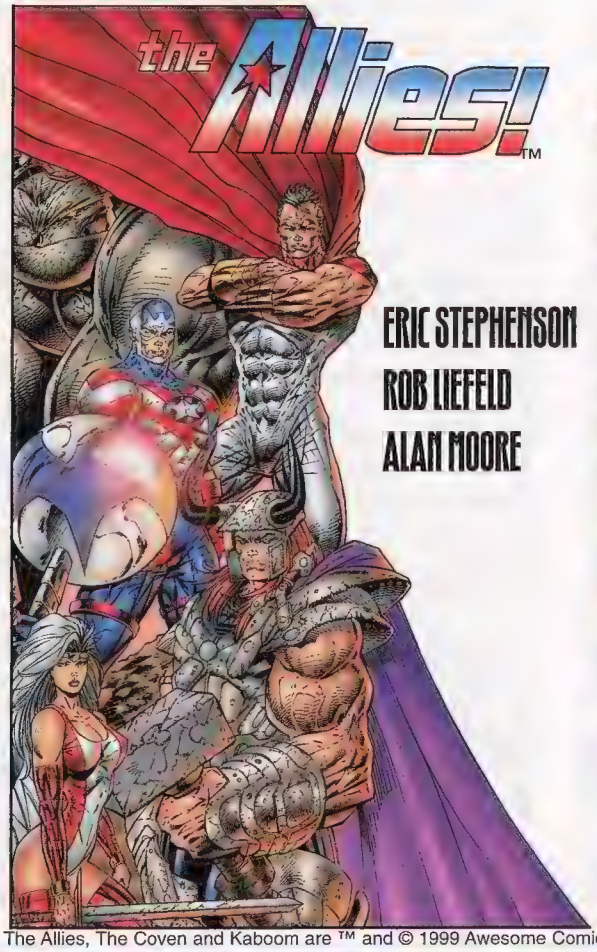

ERIC STEPHENSON
ROB LIEFELD
ALAN MOORE

ALAN MOORE • CHRIS SPROUSE

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MADMAN COMICS #12

DARK HORSE He's back! After what seemed like 16 gazillion years, there's finally a new issue of *Madman*! Anyway, this ginchy ish sees Madman, the snappiest hero in Snap City, go looking for his missing comrade in arms, Dr. Boiffard. But his other comrade in arms, Dr. Flem, is too busy with a double-secret, double-scientific experiment to help in the search. By Michael Allred. **$2.95**

NIGHTWING #32

DC COMICS The only thing better than a new villainess is *two* new villainesses! That is to say, two new chicks who call themselves "Double Dare." But when the pair start stealing from the bad guys, Nightwing has to wonder: Are they really bad girls? By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.99**

PLANETARY #3

WILDSTORM/DC The "mystery archaeologists" of Planetary trip on over to Hong Kong to pick up Jackie Chan movies at bargain-basement prices and disprove silly rumors of a ghost policeman. But when they find that the shadow cop is more than just an urban myth, the team winds up busted. By the Union Jack-salutin' Warren Ellis (remember: London's fate is in his nutty hands in *Authority* #2) and John Cassaday. **$2.50**

PREACHER #50

VERTIGO/DC Preacher Jesse Custer pays a visit to Washington, D.C.'s Vietnam War Memorial, where an old friend tells Jesse the tale of how his father won the Medal of Honor in the 'Nam. This 48-pager includes pinups by Jim Lee, Joe Quesada and others. By Garth Ennis, who remains Irish, and Briton Steve Dillon, who really, REALLY cares if London is toast. **MR. $3.75**

MADMAN COMICS #12

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

CAPTAIN AMERICA BOOKS (Marvel) S.H.I.E.L.D. and M.O.D.O.K. star in the C.O.M.I.C. *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #10. And Cap takes a trip to the future in the double-sized *Captain America* #18. ***SoL*–$1.99; *Cap*–$2.99**

DIVINE RIGHT #10 (WildStorm/DC) The lost Creation Equation–the "secret of life" that started this whole series–is finally back where it belongs. Can we just end this sucker now? $2.50

EARTH X #3 (Marvel) The Inhumans reveal just why they've come back to Earth in this possible-future story. $2.99

FANTASTIC FOUR #18 (Marvel) Sharpen your shivs and burn your mattress! The FF bust outta an alien prison! $1.99

FLASH #149 (DC Comics) It's time to play the Family Feud! The Allens take on the Thawnes, Richard Dawson gets drunk and all Hell breaks loose. $1.99

GREEN LANTERN 80-PAGE GIANT #2 (DC Comics) Short stories feature GL team-ups from A (Aquaman) to Z (Zatanna). $4.95

EARTH X #3

MAGNETO REX #2 (Marvel) Evil mutant Magneto takes his dog Rex for a walk. No, that's not it. "Rex" means "king" in Latin, and Maggy's tryin' to take over a country. Is that it? Either way it's $2.50.

SPAWN #85 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) People start to wonder: Is Spawn real, or just an urban myth? Our theory? He's a comic character. $1.95

SPAWN: DARK AGES #2 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) The Spawn of the Dark Ages questions who he is. Our theory? He's the Spawn of the Dark Ages. $2.50

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS (Marvel) Ouch! Hulk smash into *Spider-Man: Chapter One* #8. Meanwhile, a minimum of *two* Spider-Women crash into *Amazing Spider-Man* #6. And both the Kingpin and Bullseye bash their way into *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #6. **$1.99 each; *Chapter One*–$2.50**

STAR WARS BOOKS (Dark Horse) Criminal Ephant Mon–who just *hates* it when people call him "Elephant Man"–is trapped in a malfunctioning escape pod in *Star Wars* #5. It's a Vader vs. Fett throwdown in *Boba Fett–Enemy of the Empire* #4. Lots of stuff happens in *Crimson Empire–Council of Blood* #6. Trust us. And Darth tries to get the drop on sonny-boy Luke Skywalker in *Vader's Quest* #3. **$2.95 each; *Star Wars* #3–$2.50**

SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Superman makes it back earthside from the Phantom Zone in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #89. Then, Supes starts getting hate mail (huh?) in *Superman* #145. *Adventures of Superman* #568 sees Lex Luthor bust Metallo outta prison. And *Superman 80-Page Giant* #2 features guest shots from Jimmy Olsen, Supergirl and Wonder Woman. **$1.99 each; *80-Page*–$4.95**

TALES OF THE WITCHBLADE #7 (Top Cow/Image) Hey! Didja know the Witchblade has been around since ancient Egypt? True! Read all about it here. $2.95

WITCHBLADE #31 (Top Cow/Image) Witchblade-honey Sara Pezzini finds out how her father *really* died and just how many bad guys were in on this mega-conspiracy. $2.50

WOLVERINE #139 (Marvel) Wolverine don't like Cable. Cable don't like Wolverine. But they're gonna have to team up against a mutual enemy. $1.99

WOLVERINE/PUNISHER: REVELATION #1 (Marvel) Wolvie and Punny go manga-style as an underground menace starts eating people. $2.99

THE TOY MAGAZINE #23
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on the edge

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

THUNDERGIRLS #2

PIN! & INK Lessee, what sells these days? Pro rasslin' is at an all-time high, right? And space opera and time travel are always good, huh? And maybe we'll throw in some undead crap for the death-worshipping goth-walkers out there. Okay? Okay! So Jeanne "Hollywood" Basone, a former Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling star, teams with an interdimensional police officer to stop a villain from hijacking the space shuttle and activating a time machine in a tale called "Ring of Vampires." Whew! By the way, we made *none* of this up. By D. Adams and J. Boswell. **MR. $2.95**

ROBIN #65

DC COMICS The Spoiler, Robin's girlfriend, finally gives birth! But the Boy Wonder is nowhere to be found. He's scopin' out the earthquake-smashed Gotham City, wonderin' just what he can do (he can go to London to help out in *Authority* #2—they'll need it). Cigars are passed out and booties are knitted by Chuck Dixon, William Rosado and Stan Woch. **$1.99**

SAVAGE DRAGON #60

IMAGE Devastator, a big strappin' bruiser with an attitude to match his name, is in town to kick the Dragon's ass. And Dragon's superhero buddies in the Special Operations Strikeforce are powerless to help the big green lug. By the one-man band called "Erik Larsen." **$2.50**

SLINGERS #7

MARVEL He's ugly, stinky and hasn't seen the light of day in months (no—he's *not* a comic con refugee). He's Griz, a sewer-dwelling, vermin-controlling badass who blames the cute, cuddly and ever-heroic Slingers for his bad state of affairs. By Joseph Harris, Chriscross and Rob Stull. **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #27

MARVEL Faster than you can say "marketing opportunity," the X-Men's Archangel flies in to check out the T-Bolts' new transport ship and new HQ and help them fight Graviton, Master of Gravity. Winging it are Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$1.99**

TITANS #4

DC COMICS Goth, a combo horror-film star/bad guy, isn't content with mere motion picture fame. Nay! He's gonna steal the souls of his fans and mail 'em to Hell! And it's up to the Titans to stop him! Maybe he's Steve Guttenberg in disguise. By Devin Grayson, Justiniano and Wade von Grawbadger. **$2.50**

TOM STRONG #1

WILDSTORM/DC There's a new hero in town and he's really...an old hero? "What would have happened if *Action Comics* #1 came out...but Superman wasn't in it?" writer (and yes, yet another English guy) Alan Moore asks. The answer is Tom Strong—a super-intelligent, super-strong marvel of a man in the tradition of old pulp heroes. "Tom Strong is just a *name* that should exist," Moore says. "He harkens back to the time of the adventure hero *before* the superhero. He's a bit Tarzan, with touches of Doc Savage thrown in." This ish features the origin of Tom Strong, a peek into his hidden volcano fortress, hints at his 100 years of history, and a look at the crazy retro-yet-futuristic world he inhabits. By Moore (who's probably jealous he can't destroy London... again), Chris Sprouse and Al Gordon. **$3.50**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #22

VERTIGO/DC Tough-as-nails newspaper columnist Spider Jerusalem investigates the murder of political adviser Vita Severen. What's the hubbub, bub? Seems Vita used to manage the current President's campaign. This could make Lewinskygate look like small potatoes. By Warren "Rule Britannia!" Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **MR. $2.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #369

MARVEL What's worse than the unstoppable juggernaut? How 'bout an unstoppable 60-foot-tall Juggernaut! The only thing worse than that? An unstoppable 60-foot-tall Juggernaut so juiced up with power that he's crashing

through the walls between dimensions! Geez, he should really cut down on those Snickers bars. By Briton Alan Davis (yet another bloke who's hoping the Authority can put one in the "W" column for London), Adam Kubert and Tim Townsend. **$1.99**

X-MEN #89

MARVEL Gorblimey! We just realized that 13 of this month's 34 "Picks" are written by guys from Britain or Ireland. That's 38 percent! Screw the bad teeth and sucky food, they *can* write the hell out of comic books. And they also want Warren Ellis to really cut the crap by trying to destroy London. Oh, by the way—*X-Men* #89 features Marvel's merry mutants lost in time. By Alan Davis and Mark Farmer. Cheerio. **$1.99**

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

GARY BOMHURST

ORIGIN

Gary Bomhurst was born into a middle-class, New York suburban family and had a simple, uneventful childhood. Never excelling at anything and not losing his virginity until his late twenties, Gary eventually married a pleasant yet plain woman named Beth and sired two unremarkable children, Peter and Margaret. Content to merely "get by" at McGregor Industries, where he worked as an assistant general manager, Gary was demoted after his filing mistake cost the company tens of thousands of dollars. His wife, tired of their loveless marriage, left Gary after 18 years and took both children, forcing Gary to take a second job as a Grand Union night watchman to cover the spousal/child support bills. After relocating to a small apartment and realizing his life will never be the way he dreamed it would be, Gary now prays for death to release him from the mechanical drudgery of his existence.

NOW APPEARING

There are no further scheduled appearances for Gary Bomhurst in the comics industry.

REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, ANDREW KARDON AND MIKE SEARLE

BATMAN: NO MAN'S LAND

The best disaster area in comics

ISSUES REVIEWED: *Batman: No Man's Land* #1 (part 1), *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #83 (part 2), *Batman* #563 (part 3) and *Detective Comics* #730 (part 4).
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Bob Gale, Alex Maleev and Wayne Faucher
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Weekly; *No Man's Land* $3.95

What You Need to Know: Three things: 1) The U.S. government deems an earthquake-ravaged Gotham City unsalvageable, excising it from the U.S., ordering its citizens to leave; many of whom remain anyway. 2) With no electricity, fresh food, or water, roving street gangs compete for territory against each other and the former Gotham City Police Department. 3) As the story opens, Batman's been missing in action for three months.

The Good: Once you get past the silly "Gotham/U.S. rift," this story kicks ass from top to bottom. Gotham's new "way of life" in this demolished setting engages you. Cell-phones, Walkmans and even cash are worthless; bullets, batteries, flashlights and perishable foods are priceless. In part 1, a kid trades a fresh apple for three cans of beans and two cans of soup. In part 2, a punk holds a gun to a kid's head demanding his batteries. The kid calmly walks away pointing out that there are no bullets in the thug's gun, 'cause a bullet's worth more than batteries.

Commissioner Gordon also packs punch. Choosing to stay in Gotham, Gordon gives up on Batman and gathers a small police force to reclaim the city piece by piece. To do so, Gordon pits rival gangs against each other, thinning 'em all out. Even Gordon's deputy, Officer Petit, offers a jolting example to gang members (and especially to Gordon) if they ever return: he shoots one point-blank in the head!

Even lame Bat-villains such as Penguin and Scarface are now cool. Honest. Penguin is the king of Gotham's black market, who has a secret supply pipeline outside of Gotham. To keep his henchmen loyal, Scarface only gives them one bullet apiece.

The mysteries running through "NML" are also intriguing. Where has Batman been for the past three months? Who is this new mysterious Batgirl? Who's the big bad villain behind the scenes of the entire "No Man's Land"?

The Bad: Can DC Comics keep it going? Unfair criticism or not, "NML" will run throughout 1999, and it will be tough to keep any momentum—especially with completely different creative teams handling every four issues or so. One month may be the greatest Batman story ever told, but the next month's arc might suck. Too bad Bob Gale can't write 'em all.

The Buzz: Batman's got it in spades. "No Man's Land" comics sell out quickly, the new "Batman Beyond" cartoon's getting rave reviews, and the Dark Knight's even gotten mainstream exposure in mags such as *Entertainment Weekly*. Expect the Bat-buzz to continue with writer Gale tapped for another story in April.

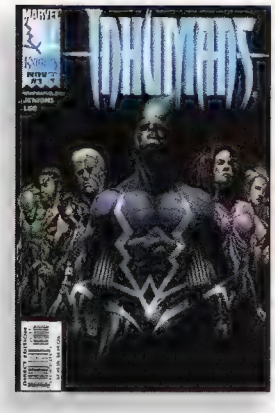
The Skinny: Considering this sounded like one of the dumbest concepts we ever heard back in October, "No Man's Land" has so far blown us away. We hope the ride doesn't stop. ■

The Gotham of "No Man's Land" is dog-eat-dog. The differing "battle" philosophies of Gordon and Petit make for tense scenes.

The new Batgirl adds great reader interaction to the mystery of who she is. (Wanna know what we think? See page 42.)

THE GRADE: A

INHUMANS
Freak-in' good



ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#5
GENRE: Superhero drama
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Ruled by the royal family of Black Bolt, Medusa, Karnak, Crystal, Triton and Gorgon, the Inhumans are a race of superbeings given strange powers through genetic engineering. They live in Atillan, a domed city isolated from humanity and want nothing to do with the world's chaos. But Black Bolt's mad brother Maximus has other plans.

The Good: We finally care about the Inhumans. In the past, these characters had about as much depth as Pam Anderson, but now they're overflowing with personality. A brooding Karnak—who has the ability to see flaws in everything—fixates on the imperfections around him, even in his fellow Inhumans. The manipulative and insane villain Maximus secretly orchestrates the destruction of Black Bolt and Atillan—all from his prison cell. There are even new characters such as the Atillan students in their final days before they're engineered into Inhumans (#2) giving readers a very human connection to the otherwise alien culture. Whether it's the humorously impatient Gorgon or the mysteriously impenetrable Black Bolt, these character are certainly more real and distinctive than ever before.

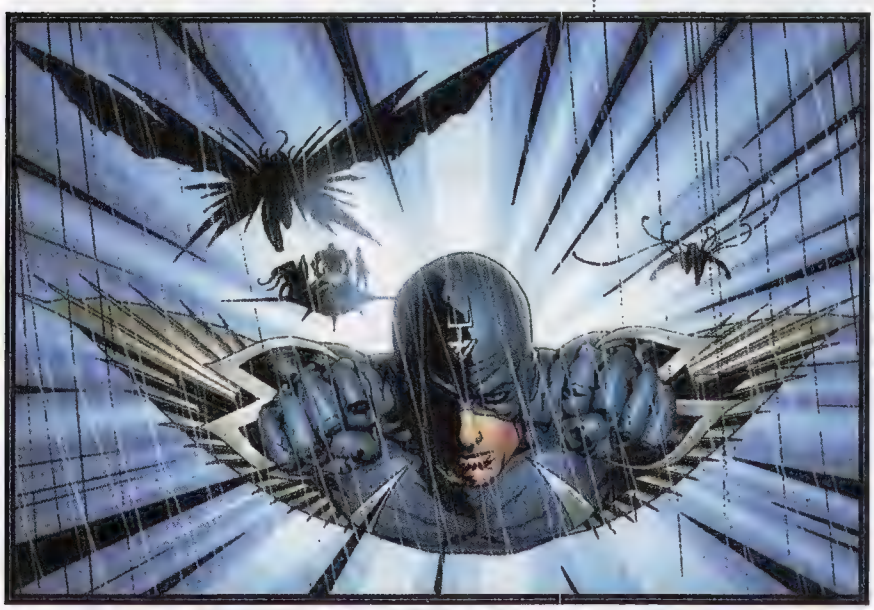
The Inhumans become ensnared in a story which blends mystery and intrigue from issue to issue. Within the Inhumans' city, the Alpha Primitives, an outcast slave race, seek to rebel against their masters (#3). Meanwhile, world politics outside the city stir a rogue Russian army to attack the Inhumans' protective dome with a barrage of missiles (#4); the conflict escalates when the dome shatters and the Inhumans are exposed to the world they want no part of (#5).

Every step of the way, the moody, inspired artwork brings a bizarre, distinct look to match each Inhumans' weird power. Coupled with lavish coloring, the scenes are realistic, spooky and mesmerizing, all rolled into one.

The Bad: There's not a whole lotta action for your more staunch superhero fans. Though the dialogue and character interaction captivates, it's a slow ride for fans who want to see Black Bolt level a mountain with a belch or Medusa strangle a villain with her hair. Also, occasional dark art, an abundance of key characters and quick plot turns (such as the multiple international political schemings in issue #4) can cause minor brain damage if you aren't careful.

The Buzz: Look out! *Inhumans* has climbed into the top 30 best seller list and shows no sign of letting up.

The Skinny: Marvel's answer to a Vertigo series has us frenzied with excitement. It's a shame *Inhumans* is only 12 issues. ■



Maximus' behind-the-scenes scheming from his prison cell finally makes him the bad-ass he was created to be!

Jenkins and Lee combine to make third stringers such as Black Bolt and company characters we can finally sympathize with.

THE GRADE: A-

MARTIAN MANHUNTER

My least favorite Martian

ISSUES REVIEWED: #0-#5
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: The lone survivor of a Martian race, J'onn J'onzz teleports to Earth in a strange scientific experiment gone awry. Possessing super-strength, invisibility, heat vision, flight, density control and shapechanging abilities, the Martian Manhunter fights alongside the JLA and tries to blend in with humanity as best he can.

The Good: The story sets up some good hooks that have lots of potential. Because of his shapechanging, J'onn lives out many different aliases around the globe, from a private detective in Denver (#1) to a Japanese business man (#2) and even a supervillain to infiltrate criminal activity (#3).

In addition to these story possibilities, the murder of J'onn's detective partner raised our eyebrows (#3) and issue #5 introduces a new twist—government agent Cameron Chase is tracking down the Manhunter's secret identity and trying to tie him to his partner's murder. With all that material, the story has the luxury of taking off in a lot of directions.

The Bad: This series bores us to tears. The first four issues go absolutely nowhere squandering much of the aforementioned potential. Issue #0 retells J'onn's origin, though it's rushed and lacks emotion; issues #1 through #3 don't do much more for the series as they're simplistic one-shots with zero twists or surprises. Not until J'onn's partner bites it as the cliffhanger to issue #3 does the series start to pick up and find a direction.

Beyond the slow pacing, the Martian Manhunter's personality has no pizzazz. Why do we want to read about him? He's brooding, distant and gruff in his dealings with others, a trait which tends to push the reader away. He needs a more human foil (*à la* Rick Jones with the Hulk) to add some spark to his interactions.

Finally, *Martian Manhunter* has more hokey elements than a "Gilligan's Island" episode. The new Martian Manhunter's powered up so much that he can "borrow mass from the planet" and become a giant Shogun Warrior (#3)? Geez, the guy's power was already at Superman's level *and he's been given more?* It's no surprise a lame cast of sub-par villains such as the "scientist in a robot body" Headmaster, a giant malfunctioning alien robot and the psychic vampire Bette Noir pose no threat to him. And that means very little excitement for the readers.

The Buzz: *Martian Manhunter*'s a direct spinoff from *JLA*, DC's #1 seller.

The Skinny: It's not easy being green. Since the Martian Manhunter is an ultra-powerful character with a stoic personality, a series starring him creates quite the challenge. Unfortunately, for a creative team that injected life into *The Spectre* a few years back, this book still needs some work. ■

Man, J'onn J'onzz exudes dullness. This typifies the type of "emotion" we usually get with this guy.

Lame villain alert! J'onn's powers come close to Superman's levels. And the villain he gets...? Bette Noir. (No, really–that's her name.)

THE GRADE: C+

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SWORD PLAY

High fantasy meets low comedy in CPM's 'Slayers'

FIREBALL FILLY Lina Inverse is the better half of the wacky adventuring team The Slayers, in it for love–the love of the almighty buck.

She's feisty, vain and cute as a button. He's tall, handsome and dumb as rocks.

Somehow, they make the perfect pair. Maybe it's because she's Lina Inverse, super, fireball-slinging mage extraordinaire, and he's Gourry, the hottest mercenary this side of Mirkwood. Together they're the Slayers, and they spell terminal embarrassment for any thief, princess or monster who gets between them and the gold, food or adventure they regard as rightfully theirs. Which covers almost everything in sight at any given moment.

Lina and Gourry have a strange platonic relationship based on Gourry's dog-like devotion to Lina and Lina's desire for Gourry's magic sword (no Freudian cracks, please). Actually, Lina does like her dimwitted but earnest champion, but she isn't above offering to leave him in the clutches of a love-smitten noblewoman if the latter will let Lina have his sword.

Slayers' combination of high fantasy and low humor has won it many devoted fans. Lina and Gourry inhabit a fantastic world of magic swords, lost treasure and royal scheming—but also a weird one inhabited by diary-toting lords, chicken-man flunkies, cross-dressing cat burglars and sexy bunny girls.

A great deal of *Slayers*' appeal is Lina's charm. She's a saucy spitfire—cute, deadly and in your face. Nothing in her world can really hurt her, and she knows it. Her one true weakness is her somewhat underdeveloped bust line, a "defect" which returns to haunt her again and again, both in the bathhouse and in the heat of battle. It's the only thing that can shatter her otherwise towering self-confidence, and the only thing that *will* bring down fire from heaven on the heads of those who bring it up.

Slayers, long a popular anime title in the United States, got its start as a series of Japanese novels penned by Hajime Kanzaka, with illustrations by Rui Araizumi. The novels proved to be a big hit, and Kanzaka and Araizumi were off and running. First came a roleplaying game, then the manga, and then the big time, as *Slayers* hit both the big and small screens as an animated property. Kanzaka and Araizumi have stayed with the title through it all, he providing the words and she the images.

Despite its prior success as an anime series in America, picking up the *Slayers* manga wasn't a no-brainer choice for Central Park Media—it's not like there are a plethora of fantasy comedies on the comic market. "We wanted a sword-and-sorcery series to tie in with other titles we were developing, like *Lodoss Wars*," *Slayers* editor C.B. Cebulski says. "The comedy aspect was kind of a reach," he adds, but a successful one—*Slayers* has become CPM's most successful manga series in just five months.

Araizumi's art style is perfectly suited to depicting the adventures of Lina and Gourry—her characters are in turn zany and heroic, and her detailed backgrounds bring to life the palaces, bars and city streets of the *Slayers* fantasy world.

Slayers isn't all wine and roses, to be sure. It's almost *too* flighty, for one thing; Kanzaka and Araizumi never let a serious moment get in the way of a good gag, and the plot often careens from point to point like a drunken

BY PAUL SUDLOW

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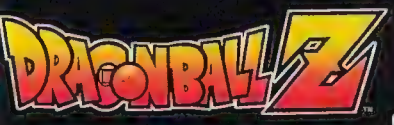

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Bastard! © 1992, 1998 Kazushi Nagiwara • Shueisha

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hummingbird. The gags and characters are great, but with few serious moments to break up the story, the manga comes off a bit one-note. Fortunately, it's a funny one.

The comic's production values leave a bit to be desired. Spoiled by the crisp reproductions offered by Viz and Dark Horse, readers might be a little put off by the muddy screen tones in *Slayers*. Fortunately, Cebulski assures *Wizard* that things, they are a-changin'. "We've brought production in-house, changed printers and are getting better originals from Japan."

There are eight thick graphic novels in Japan jam-packed with *Slayers* madness, so Lina and Gourry have plenty of adventures before them. Since *Slayers* is a big hit for CPM, it's likely to be around for quite a while. In fact, the first graphic novel, *Medieval Mayhem*, is due out in June. The black-and-white *Slayers*, by CPM Comics, sells for $2.95 a pop. And for those who want to see Lina and pals in living color, CPM and A.D.V. Films have a cartload of "Slayers" videos to sell you.

Wizard Entertainment editor Paul Sudlow wishes everyone a happy Ides of March.

ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

Tekken the Motion Picture

(A.D.V. Films, 60 minutes, $19.98 dubbed or subtitled, $29.95 DVD)

In the world of "Tekken the Motion Picture," it's all about revenge, kicking butt-ocks and havin' big fists, baby! Evil mastermind Heihachi Mishima throws his son Kazuya off a cliff as a child, inspiring the little spike-haired tyke to dedicate his life to destroying his father. Years later, the best fighters in the world are gathering on Mishima's island for the Iron First tournament, and Kazuya shows up to take pop down.

It's all very Bruce Lee, really.

Tekken the video game is loaded with characters, and most of them at least appear in a cameo role here—King, Law and Yoshimitsu among them—while others, like Hong Kong supercop Jun Kazama have more substantial roles. The fights are short but sweet, featuring some of the game's moves and more than a little blood.

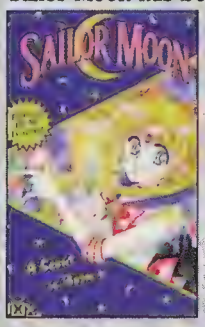
There's no guile or subtlety in the world of "Tekken"; the plot is linear and predictable. But nobody fires up a slugfest video for the social commentary. They wanna see killer robots, invisodinosaurs and huge explosions, and "Tekken" never fails to please on that score. ■ PS

MANGAPICKS

MUST-READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN MARCH

Sailor Moon—A Scout is Born

MIXX ENTERTAINMENT



Sailor Moon has been introduced in about every known form of media, from movies, drama CDs and Sega games to plays, music videos and comics. Now, for the first time anywhere, get set for the Sailor Moon novel line. In *A Scout is Born*, the villainous Bunny is confronted by her duty to fight evil as Sailor Moon and dish out justice with the power of love. $4.99

Maison Ikkoku Part 9 #1

VIZ ENTERTAINMENT

It's blast-from-the-past time at Casa de Ikkoku when perennially unemployed Godai's one-time girlfriend Kozue shows up to rekindle old flames. But she isn't the meek, giddy girl she once was. The saga of Godai and Kyoko has been going for years now, but at last the end is in sight as *Maison Ikkoku* enters its final chapters. Fair warning: Creator Rumiko Takahashi loves ambiguous endings! Will we have a definite resolution to the multiple love triangles populating this manga, or will she leave us dangling? Only time will tell. $3.25

Futaba-kun Change! Vol. 1 Graphic Novel

STUDIO IRONCAT

For most people puberty is a trying time, but for Futaba it's even worse. Whenever he gets excited, he turns into a girl! Meet Futaba, along with his wrestling team buddies, cute classmate Misaki, and his insanely precocious big sister Futana as they turn his life upside-down. Ironcat's first graphic novel collects the first six issues of the wacky gender-bender comedy by Aro Hiroshi. It's for mature readers only. $15.95

Oh My Goddess!: SuperUrd

DARK HORSE COMICS

Goddess Urd's evil doppelganger has been vanquished, but now university student Keiichi and the gang are stuck with the extra Urd skin they used to defeat her. It isn't the sort of thing you toss in the recycling bin, after all! Happily, Banpei, the household robot, seizes this unique opportunity to don the skin and haunt the town as SuperUrd, defender of the weak and champion of justice. Yes, it's as weird as it sounds. $2.95 ■ PS

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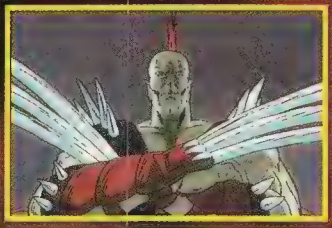
Fist Of the North Star

THE SERIES



Nuclear war has devastated the planet, turning once fertile ground into a barren, inhospitable landscape on which mankind struggles desperately to stay alive. Society has collapsed and a fight for control wages between vicious dictators, super-powerful mutants and biker gangs that terrorize the streets.

In a world so cruel and bleak only the chosen one can restore civilization to its former self. This man is ***Kenshiro***, master of the '***Hokuto Shinken***' fighting technique; a martial art so awesomely brutal that only a single being can be entrusted with its full power.

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COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

BATMAN RETURNS!

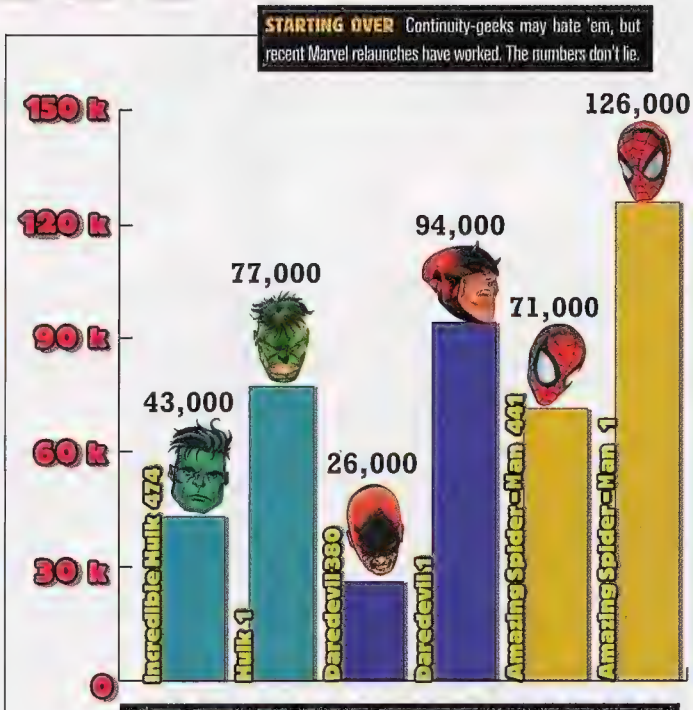
'No Man's Land' wrecks Gotham, rebuilds fan base

The Bat is back.

Okay, to be fair, he never really left. But most of the comic industry's Bat-praise—and most of the heat—has gone to special projects such as *Batman: The Long Halloween*, with the main Batman titles floundering to find direction.

But the current "No Man's Land" story arc, featuring Batman fighting for a Gotham City that's been cut off from the rest of the world, has changed all that. The new direction, combined with an influx of new writing talent from folks such as Bob Gale ("Back to the Future") and Devin Grayson (*Titans*), drove direct-market sales on Batman titles up anywhere from 10 to 18 percent in January.

What's curious is that in today's direct market, that increase translates to maybe another 5,000 copies of each book being printed.



STARTING OVER Continuity-geeks may hate 'em, but recent Marvel relaunches have worked. The numbers don't lie.

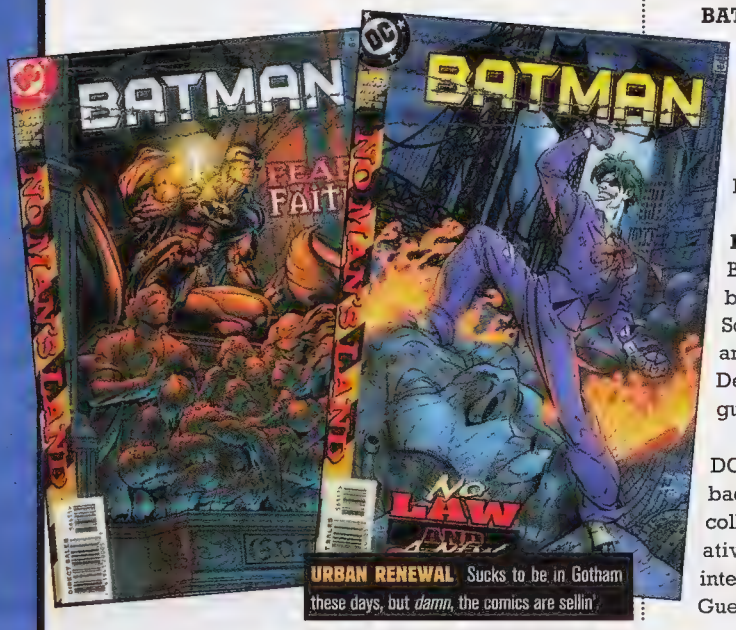
(Source: Diamond Comic Distribution. Figures represent initial direct-market orders.)

That's peanuts compared to potential demand. So "NML" issues are already starting to move. Take a look:

BATMAN: SHADOW OF THE BAT #83—The money shot. Not only does this feature the debut of a major player—the new Batgirl—but *Shadow of the Bat* is habitually among the lowest-ordered Batman titles. It sold about 3,000 copies fewer than *Detective Comics* in January, which might seem like nothing, but that's another 3,000 fans who're going hungry.

BATMAN #563—While not as volatile as the first Batgirl appearance, this sucker would be ripe for a bump anyway, with a cover by *Danger Girl* artist J. Scott Campbell. Never mind that it was a Joker cover and the Joker (Huh?) doesn't appear in the issue. Demand is high and *Batman* #563 is up in the price guide this month.

Of course, this newfound heat may change as DC—always eager to reprint books in trade paperback 20 minutes after they're released—is already collecting "No Man's Land" into paperback. But relatively small initial numbers might drive further interest as new readers can jump on the bandwagon. Guess you better watch the Bat-signal, fanboy.



URBAN RENEWAL Sucks to be in Gotham these days, but *damn*, the comics are sellin'.

'COVEN' #1 SWAPS COVERS

Confused by the covers on the relaunch of *The Coven* (vol. 2) #1? You're not alone.

The original plan for Awesome Entertainment's mystical series by Jeph Loeb (*Superman for all Seasons*) and Ian Churchill (*Cable*) was that issue #1 would have four variant covers, each with a new origin story on the various members—Scratch, Blackmass, Fantom and Spellcaster. At the same time, Dynamic Forces offered a separate exclusive cover. Got it so far?

Unfortunately, there was a goof—the Scratch cover and the Dynamic Forces cover were switched. On the day of *Coven* #1's release, most comic retailers were shipped the Blackmass, Fantom and Spellcaster issues, and—lo and behold!—the Dynamic Forces "exclusive cover" issue. Simultaneously, Dynamic was baffled to receive the Scratch issue.

Awesome Entertainment promised to honor their orders by printing and shipping to retailers, at no extra charge (the nice guys), the ordered Scratch covers. Awesome will also give Dynamic Forces a *new* Ian Churchill cover to make good on the promise of having an exclusive cover. So whereas there were formerly four "regular" covers and one exclusive, there are now *five* regulars and an exclusive. Whew!

The upshot? Wait and see. Some retailers have hoarded Dynamic covers, thinking them to be double-scarce. Other retailers who received some Scratch covers are doing the same with Scratchy-poo. Any way you slice it, the first *Coven* series was a back-issue mover, and this second helping may follow suit.

STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

And now, it's time for the ever-popular nuggets of info you fans have come to know and love. The arrows? They tell ya what's happening in the back issue market.

BATTLE CHASERS and **DANGER GIRL**—They've dodged the hall monitor many times, but there's no way Cliffhanger's *Battle Chasers* and *Danger Girl* can escape their legacy of being late *all the time*. The #5 issues of each title were

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, SMITH, KUBERT, MADUREIRA, ROSS, TURNER, NAID QUESADA, LARSEN, JIM LEE BY PAUL SCHRADER; BARRIS, CAMPBELL BY JOHN W. MCDONOUGH; MORR SON BY BOB MARTIN; PÉREZ BY BOB SMITH; JURGENS, JAE LEE BY WIZARD; GARTH ENNIS PHOTO COURTESY MAUREEN MCTIGUE; PAT LEE PHOTO © KENRY SAYES; PAUL JENKINS PHOTO BY DEREK ROCKNOR; ALAN DAVIS PHOTO BY WIZARD; CHRIS CLAREMONT PHOTO BY JOHN T. BARR

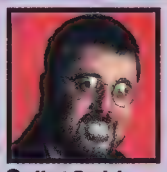
TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

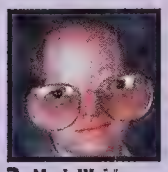
These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nation-wide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kevin Smith
Clerks, Daredevil

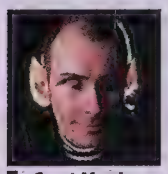


2. Kurt Busiek
Avengers, Thunderbolts



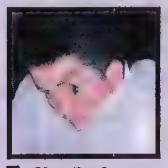
3. Mark Waid
Captain America, Flash

4. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman



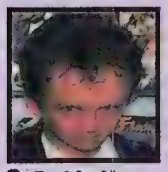
5. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

6. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Superman



7. Alan Davis
X-Men, Uncanny X-Men

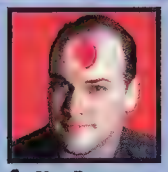
8. Erik Larsen
Wolverine, Savage Dragon



9. Paul Jenkins
Inhumans

10. Chris Claremont
Fantastic Four

ARTISTS



1. Alex Ross
Earth X

2. Adam Kubert
Uncanny X-Men

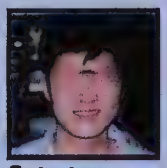
3. George Pérez
Avengers

4. Michael Turner
Fathom

5. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

6. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

7. Joe Quesada
Daredevil, Ash



8. Jae Lee
Inhumans

9. Jim Lee
Divine Right

10. Pat Lee
Darkminds, upcoming: Wolverine/Punisher

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

INHUMANS #5

Wondering why *Inhumans* #5 is so special? Two reasons: First, *Inhumans* is a great read (No lie!). Second, those ever-so-tricky boys of the Marvel Knights crew have sneaked in the first appearance of (drum roll, please) a new Black Widow!

And the new *Black Widow* mini-series–debuting in April, written by Devin Grayson (*Titans*), and with art by J.G. Jones (*Shi: Black, White and Red*)–is rumored to be another gem in the Knights line. If the new series is successful, comic readers, nutty collectors that they (you) are, will want this puppy pretty damed badly. So you'd best grab yourself a copy of *Inhumans* #5 now...before this Widow takes a bite out of your wallet. ■ LP

originally solicited for September shipping. By March 1, both were *still* AWOL. Yes, that means they're six months late. As fans get pissed, this chronic irresponsibility erodes back-issue interest. It also hurts both creators' fan profiles (see "Top 10 Artists" to see what we mean).

POKÉMON: THE ELECTRIC TALE OF PIKACHU—The *Pokémon* comic has soared as the hit Game Boy title and TV series constantly turn out new comic readers. And now, the Pokémon collectible card game has blasted Star Wars to become the second-best-selling item in that industry too. Pokémania is out of control, and issues #1 and #2 of this low-printed Viz series easily go for $13 a pop.

KINGDOM COME SLIPCASE—Any time Alex Ross releases a new project, it's an event. This slipcase, with its additional book of Ross' sketches and designs, originally retailed at $100, but now sells between $200 and $225.

DEAD OR ALIVE? Who cares? *Green Arrow* #101 is worth big bucks.

GREEN ARROW #101—As rumors fly that "Clerks" screenwriter Kevin Smith might write new adventures of the Oliver Queen version of Green Arrow, fans are anxious to have the issue where Queen "died," *Green Arrow* #101. On the Internet—one factor among many that determines guide prices—the issue has fetched up to $34. Bull's-eye.

THE INVISIBLES VOL. 1 #16-#25—By the time the first *Invisibles* series came to an end, sales were in the crapper and these issues were low-printed. Now that the third and final *Invisibles* volume is (Finally!) getting some attention, readers are paying big bucks for these issues so scarce, they're nearly (*ahem*) invisible. (W)

Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson will pay big bucks for peppermint swirl ice cream in mint condition, or a copy of Sonic Disruptors *#12.*

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Sunnyvale, CA 94087
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Caveman
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Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
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Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
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TOP 10 comics

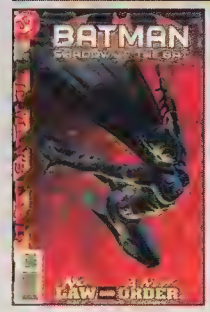
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 WHAT IF...? (VOL. 2) #105

WRITERS: Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz
ARTISTS: Ron Frenz and Bill Sienkiewicz

So you've gotcher Spider-Man, who's been big with fans the world over since 1963. And you've gotcher women, who've been big with fans since the ape creatures crawled out of the ooze back in 9324 B.C. or however that goes. When you take good ol' Spidey and twist him around a little bit into the fairer sex, well then, by gosh, the fans are gonna jump up and down on the bed until Mom tells 'em to stop. Or an equivalent reaction. **LAST MONTH:** 2

2 BATMAN: SHADOW OF THE BAT #83



WRITER: Bob Gale
ARTISTS: Alex Maleev and Wayne Faucher

Return of the mack! When's the last time Batman clicked with readers this hellaciously? Not since he popped up on "Scooby Doo," we'd reckon. Anyhow, this whole "No Man's Land" story is really catching on, not to mention that this issue had pretty low orders and even introduces the new Batgirl! Hey, remember when Batman took out Shaggy with a well-placed kick to the spine? Hmm...maybe that's just the way we'd *like* to remember it. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

3 INHUMANS #1

WRITER: Paul Jenkins
ARTIST: Jae Lee

This lovable band of superheroic freaks keeps gaining new readers each month, making the first issue quite the hot commodity. We remember when we were quite the hot commodity, when the braces came off and Dad gave us the keys to the Skylark. Stylin'! Anyway, missing out on this issue would be inhumane. Haw! Sorry. **LAST MONTH:** 4

4 BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER #1

WRITER: Andi Watson
ARTISTS: Joe Bennett and Rick Ketcham

How hot is Buffy the Vampire Slayer? Err...the entertainment property, not the actual Buffy. Well, we'll tell ya: there's gonna be Buffy toys in 1999! How cool is that? So if you had any doubts about BTVS (that's what the cool kids call it) cementing its place in history, let those doubts fade away. **LAST MONTH:** 1

5 SPIDER-GIRL #1

WRITER: Tom DeFalco
ARTISTS: Pat Olliffe and Al Williamson

Holy mackerel! Who said Spider-Girl could get so popular? We're putting our foot down right now. After all, if this gets too far out of hand we're gonna see comic sales shoot up, the back-issue market take off and the comic industry rebound to huge numbers reminiscent of 1992! And that wouldn't do *anybody* any good. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

6 DAREDEVIL #1

WRITER: Kevin Smith
ARTISTS: Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti

Hmm. Kevin *Smith*. Sounds as though his ancestors were in the iron-pounding business. Just whacking away with hammers and anvils, little realizing that far in the future, little Kevin would be writing hotter-than-hot comics such as *Daredevil*. And you know what they'd say if they knew? "What the @#$% is *Daredevil*?" **LAST MONTH:** 3

7 POKÉMON: THE ELECTRIC TALE OF PIKACHU #1

WRITER: Toshihiro Ono
ARTIST: Toshihiro Ono

Pikachu! I see you! Listen up, *nobody* crafts a tale of little brawling critters who spit fire and zap each other with lightning bolts like Toshihiro Ono. Hey, we want a Pikachu for the *Wizard* offices! He could run around and fetch coffee, and zap our Valiant back issues into ash for recycling. **LAST MONTH:** 7

8 TRANSMETROPOLITAN #1

WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTISTS: Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos

For those of you not in the know, Spider Jerusalem is a gonzo journalist in the future who gets into all sorts of crazy hijinks. Err...it's actually better than we make it sound. And readers are starting to figure it out. It's too darn bad there're so few back issues. Suckers! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

9 STAR WARS: CRIMSON EMPIRE #1

WRITERS: Mike Richardson and Randy Stradley
ARTIST: Paul Gulacy

Well, let this issue be the harbinger of all things to follow: Star Wars is going to rule your life in 1999. This issue from last year's mini-series is doing well on the back market, especially since there's another *Crimson Empire* series on the way. We just hope there's wookiees in it. Wookiee wookiee wookiee! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

10 LEAGUE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY GENTLEMEN #1

WRITER: Alan Moore
ARTIST: Kevin O'Neill

"Alan Moore? Gimme!" Everyone knows the Moore dude's liable to whip out the next *Watchmen* at any moment, so lots of readers wanted to check out his latest effort. The problem? There's not enough copies. Suckers! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **FEBRUARY**

TOP 100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff using data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

Artist Leinil Yu's last fill-in before returning to *Wolverine* duty was *Uncanny #367*.

1. Uncanny X-Men #367 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #87 (Marvel)
3. Battle Chasers #5 (WildStorm/DC)
4. Danger Girl #5 (WildStorm/DC)
5. Earth X #1 (Marvel)
6. Spawn #83 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
7. Avengers #15 (Marvel)
8. Wolverine #137 (Marvel)
9. JLA #28 (DC)
10. Daredevil #6 (Marvel)
11. Amazing Spider-Man #4 (Marvel)
12. Hulk #1 (Marvel)
13. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #4 (Marvel)
14. Fantastic Four #16 (Marvel)
15. Thor #10 (Marvel)
16. Captain America #16 (Marvel)
17. Gambit #3 (Marvel)
18. Iron Man #15 (Marvel)
19. Mutant X #7 (Marvel)
20. Avengers Forever #5 (Marvel)
21. Spider-Man: Chapter One #6 (Marvel)
22. Witchblade #30 (Top Cow/Image)
23. Crimson #9 (WildStorm/DC)
24. The Darkness #22 (Top Cow/Image)
25. Generation X #50 (Marvel)
26. X-Man #50 (Marvel)
27. X-Force #89 (Marvel)
28. Aria #3 (Avalon Studios/Image)
29. Inhumans #6 (Marvel)
30. Green Lantern #111 (DC)
31. Titans #2 (DC)
32. Spider-Girl #7 (Marvel)
33. Cable #66 (Marvel)
34. Batman #564 (DC)
35. Thunderbolts #25 (Marvel)
36. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #6 (Dark Horse)
37. KISS: The Psycho Circus #17 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
38. Detective Comics #731 (DC)
39. Nightwing #30 (DC)
40. The Crow #1 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
41. Black Panther #6 (Marvel)
42. Action Comics #753 (DC)
43. Superman #143 (DC)
44. Star Wars: Vader's Quest #1 (Dark Horse)
45. Buffy the Vampire Slayer—Origin #2 (Dark Horse)
46. Adventures of Superman #566 (DC)
47. Preacher #48 (Vertigo/DC)
48. Batman & Superman: World's Finest #1 (DC)
49. Webspinners: Tales of Spider-Man #4 (Marvel)
50. Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty #8 (Marvel)
51. Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #13 (DC)
52. Gen^{13} #38 (WildStorm/DC)
53. The Flash #147 (DC)
54. Planetary #1 (WildStorm/DC)
55. Hourman #1 (DC)
56. Young Justice #7 (DC)
57. Superman & Batman: Generations #4 (DC)
58. Star Wars #3 (Dark Horse)
59. Deadpool #27 (Marvel)
60. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #84 (DC)
61. Star Wars: Boba Fett—Enemy of the Empire #2 (D.H.)
62. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #116 (DC)
63. Ascension #14 (Top Cow/Image)
64. Green Lantern: The New Corps #2 (DC)
65. The Tenth: Black Embrace #1 (Image)
66. Cable 1999 (Marvel)
67. Doctor Strange #3 (Marvel)
68. A-Next #7 (Marvel)
69. Star Wars: Crimson Empire II #4 (Dark Horse)
70. Robin #63 (DC)
71. Darkminds #8 (Image)
72. Avengelyne #1 (Awesome)
73. Spirit of the Tao #8 (Top Cow/Image)
74. Catwoman #67 (DC)
75. Supergirl #31 (DC)
76. League of Extraordinary Gentlemen #2 (WildStorm/DC)
77. J2 #7 (Marvel)
78. Lady Death/Vampirella: Dark Hearts (Chaos!)
79. Batman Chronicles #16 (DC)
80. Stone (vol. 2) #1 (Avalon Studios/Image)
81. Slingers #5 (Marvel)
82. Vampirella/Lady Death #1(Harris)
83. Wonder Woman #143 (DC)
84. Legends of the DC Universe #15 (DC)
85. Flash 80-Page Giant #2 (DC)
86. Martian Manhunter #5 (DC)
87. Starman #52 (DC)
88. Gen^{13} Wired (WildStorm/DC)
89. Birds of Prey #4 (DC)
90. Superman's Nemesis: Lex Luthor #2 (DC)
91. Batman Beyond #2 (DC)
92. Lady Death #14 (Chaos!)
93. Sandman Presents: Lucifer #2 (Vertigo/DC)
94. Coven (vol. 2) #3 (Awesome)
95. Superboy #61 (DC)
96. Aquaman #54 (DC)
97. Azrael: Agent of the Bat #51 (DC)
98. Hitman #36 (DC)
99. DV8 #0 (WildStorm/DC)
100. Savage Dragon #58 (Image)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

DOUBLE-DIP FOR 'EARTH X'

Earth X #1 (No. 5)
Earthshaking! *Earth X* #0 charted at No. 5 last month, and *Earth X* #1 follows in the exact same spot this month. And with a healthy $2.99 cover price, *Earth X* #1 also comes in as the No. 1 money-maker for February. Today's lesson: Artist Alex Ross still reigns supreme, and starting a series with a #0 (then following with a #1) can make for a double-scoop of dollars.

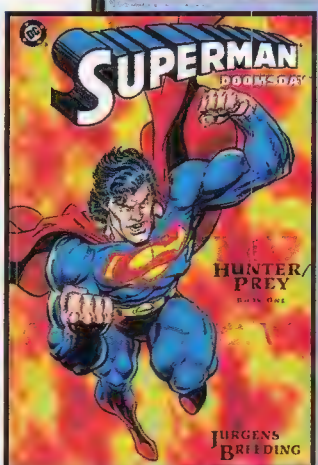
Aria #3 (No. 28)
You usually see a big sales drop-off after a title's first couple of issues. But such has *not* been the case with Aria. The art of newcomer Jay Anacleto absolutely slays readers, and writer Brian Holguin likely draws a few people who read his other monthly, *KISS: The Psycho Circus*. Put 'em together and *Aria* is remarkably stable.

Cable #66 (No. 33)
Holy goosh! *Cable* gunned up nine slots this month with the first part of the "Sign of the End Times" story arc, the beginning of a *major* X-themed story for 1999. The question of "who are the Twelve," an X-mystery that's been going on for 12 years (!), is only one item rumored to be concluded, and fans apparently can't wait to see how things turn out.

The Crow #1 (No. 40)
How the hell did a No. 40 ranking happen here? There's been no "Crow" movie or comic out since dodos went extinct! But hardcore Crow fandom never really died out, and now that Todd McFarlane Productions is handling this new series, the mainstream has joined the hardcores. And considering McFarlane himself rarely draws *anything* comics anymore, a 1-in-4 McFarlane-drawn variant cover just added fuel to the fire.

Star Wars: Vader's Quest #1 (No. 44)
Last month, we told you that *Boba Fett–Enemy of the Empire*, at No. 50, was a damn good showing for a Star Wars comic. Well, *Vader's Quest* at No. 44 is...even better. "Prequel Mania" continues to build, and you can bet the presence of artist Dave Gibbons (*Watchmen*) scored extra sales among the fanboy crowd.

Planetary #1 (No. 54)
Planetary. Unproven. Untested. Unknown. Yet it sold well, even beating *Hourman* and its much-coveted *JLA* tie-in. Guess writer Warren Ellis (*Transmetropolitan*) has more pull than you thought, and John Cassaday (*Desperadoes*) has a following all his own. This team of "mystery archaeologists" is definitely one to watch.



SUPERMAN SMASH! Big Blue and Doomsday whipped the bejeezus outta each other in *Hunter/Prey*.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.

FLYIN' HIGH Destruction good! An earthquake and "No Man's Land" has led to a Batman resurgence, and sales are up across the board.

TOP BATMAN FAMILY BOOKS (ALL DC)

1. Batman #564 (No. 34)
2. Detective Comics #731 (No. 38)
3. Nightwing #30 (No. 39)
4. Batman & Superman: World's Finest #1 (No. 48)
5. Superman & Batman: Generations #4 (No. 57)
6. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #84 (No. 60)
7. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #116 (No. 62)
8. Robin #63 (No. 70)
9. Catwoman #67 (No. 74)
10. Batman Chronicles #16 (No. 79)

TOP MOVIE/TV LICENSES

1. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #6 (Dark Horse, No. 36)
2. Star Wars: Vader's Quest #1 (Dark Horse, No. 44)
3. Buffy the Vampire Slayer—Origin #2 (Dark Horse, No. 45)
4. Star Wars #3 (Dark Horse, No. 58)
5. Star Wars: Boba Fett—Enemy of the Empire #2 (Dark Horse, No. 61)
6. Star Wars: Crimson Empire II #4 (Dark Horse, No. 69)
7. Pokémon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu #4 (Viz, No. 110)
8. Sailor Moon #5 (Mixx, No. 112)
9. Dragonball Z Part Two #3 (Viz, No. 138)
10. Dragonball #12 (Viz, No. 147)

LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. X-Men #33 (Marvel)
2. Spawn #21 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
3. Uncanny X-Men #313 (Marvel)
4. Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey #1 (DC)
5. Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey #2 (DC)
6. Action Comics #700 (DC)
7. WildC.A.T.s #10 (WildStorm/Image)
8. Wolverine #82 (Marvel)
9. Adventures of Cyclops and Phoenix #2 (Marvel)
10. X-Men Unlimited #5 (Marvel)

Following up the "Death of Superman" hype, DC rolled out a two-issue *Superman/Doomsday* sequel, figuring Doomsday was hot enough to justify $5 a copy. Doomsday's secrets were revealed (the bastard can't die!), and the Man of Steel beat his rocky ass into submission, eventually stranding him at the end of time. Today? The beat goes on, as the recently released *Superman: The Doomsday Wars* sequeled the sequel.

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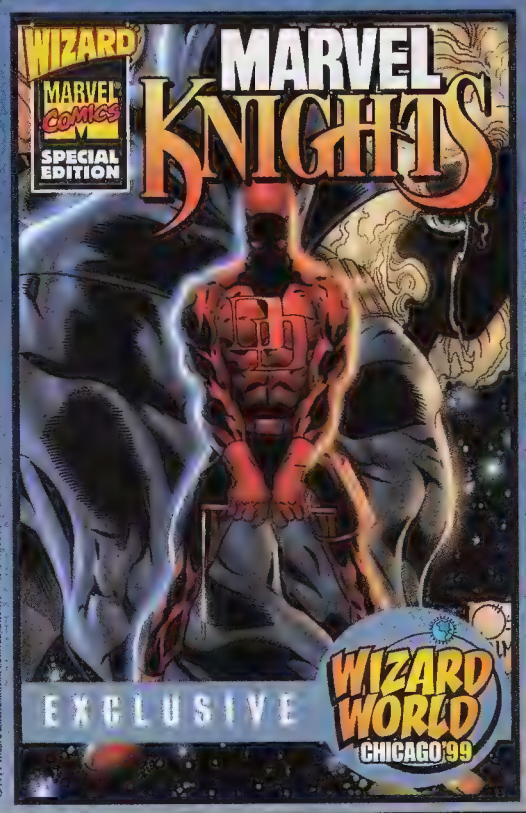

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

In this special April Fools' Day edition of C.B.I.Q., can you separate the comic facts from the goofy crap we made up? You can judge how you do with the Official Grade-o-Meter below. This month we're grading your score against events that you will never, ever see in the comic book industry. The more unlikely the event, the higher your score.

SCORE	RANK
0-3	Battle Chasers #5
4-8	*DC continuity*
7-11	*A Liefeld character with a left foot AND a right foot*
12	*"...presented by Jim Shooter"*

1 What was part of Dr. Doom's costume in his first appearance?
a) A giant, steel "D" on his chest
b) Footsie pajamers
c) Knickers
d) A cowl with one of those beer can/straw thingies attached

2 Matt Murdock is Daredevil. So...who's Mike Murdock?
a) The alternate-reality Daredevil from the same dimension as the Squadron Supreme
b) Matt's "twin" that Matt made up and pretended to be in order to throw off suspicion that he was Daredevil
c) Matt's crazy, flatulent uncle with a taste for booze and an eye for the young'uns
d) Barry Allen's evil twin brother who was separated at birth and raised by magic gypsies. Weird coincidence, no?

3 In a storyline that doesn't even make sense to slow-witted 5-year-olds, which villain was the Flash powerless to stop and why?
a) Mud Bath, who could change all terrain into mud, making it impossible for the Flash to run
b) The Ham 'n' Egger, who could magically fill the Flash's belly with food so the speedster would get horrible cramps if he ran
c) The Turtle, who moved sooo slow, the super-fast Flash couldn't touch him
d) Gotta Go Gary, who could telekinetically apply pressure to the Flash's bladder, making him, well, have to go

4 To look more like a badass, what modification did Tony Stark make to the Iron Man armor?
a) He added a nose.
b) He carved "Stark 3:16" on his chest.
c) He added six inches to his boot soles to make himself look taller.
d) He welded a sign onto the back that read, "If this armor's a-rockin', don't come a-knockin'!"

5 After thwarting the invasion plans of the alien, shapeshifting Skrulls, how did Reed Richards teach 'em a lesson?
a) He trapped them in human form, forcing them to live their lives out as "disgusting" humans.
b) He made them shapeshift into cows and then hypnotized them into believing they were cows.
c) He made them all shapeshift into Sarah Michelle Gellar look-alikes, then slipped the Thing some Spanish fly.
d) He made them shapeshift into Beanie babies and sold them on eBay.

6 Nothing about the New Gods is good. With that said, which New Gods character acts as the embodiment of death?
a) The Touch, a disembodied, floating face that gives the "kiss of death"
b) The Pillower, a disgruntled male nurse who suffocates the elderly with pillows
c) The Black Racer, some black dude who flies around on cosmic skies
d) ...Actually, if death means cancellation of any book they're in, all the New Gods are the embodiment of death.

7 The Spider-Man villain Slyde kept superheroes at bay via:
a) His ungrippable Teflon coating.
b) Stripping to his Speedos and covering himself with olive oil (Northstar loved fighting this guy).
c) The slippery, grease-like substance excreted through his pores.
d) Serving people White Castle hamburgers.

8 While trapped on a boat full of superpowered, evil women (is there any other kind?), Captain America almost fell prey to a dastardly plot to:
a) Make him their brainwashed, pink-clad "war machine."
b) Steal his sperm and impregnate themselves to give birth to an unstoppable army of super-soldiers.
c) turn him into a chick.
d) mess with his mind so he'd like "Felicity" and "Dawson's Creek."

9 Towering, elder dragon Fin Fang Foom used to clothe himself with:
a) Nothing. He was just always drawn with objects strategically covering his naughty dragon-bits.
b) Li'l underpants.
c) a smock.
d) New York City's Grand Central Station.

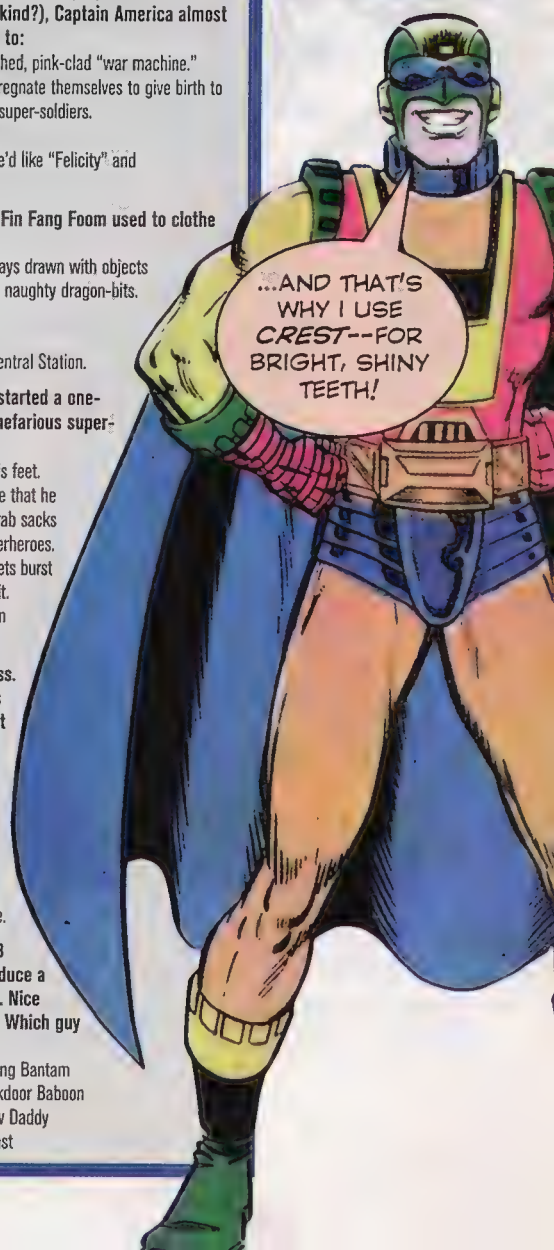
10 The villain Leap Frog started a one-man crime wave using his nefarious super-power of:
a) Big, bouncy springs on his feet.
b) An inhumanly long tongue that he could use as a rope to grab sacks of money and tie up superheroes.
c) The ability to make Muppets burst into flame just by willing it.
d) Well, basically, he just ran around and sucked.

11 Captain Ultra is a badass. He can fly, see through walls and lift really heavy stuff. But what's his one weakness?
a) Small, South American boys
b) Large, South American boys
c) The color red
d) He passes out when he sees even the smallest flame.

12 The theme for the 1993 Marvel annuals was to introduce a new character in each issue. Nice idea, shame they all sucked. Which guy didn't we make up?
a) The rooster-themed Battling Bantam
b) The monkey-themed Backdoor Baboon
c) The crayfish-themed Craw Daddy
d) The toast-themed Mr. Toast

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on page 183 if this is too tough...



BULLPEN

LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Rumble Pack

Smashing people with chairs helps bring them closer together.

At least, that's what we've learned from our foray into the world of professional wrestling. It all started back when Harry Slash, music producer for ECW (Extreme Championship Wrestling), read the "Bullpen" in *Wizard* #89, where we explained in heart-stopping detail the pains we went through to get translations to *WCW vs. nWo: World Tour*, one of the best fighting games ever made for the Nintendo 64. Well, Harry, still needing some of those translations for his game, called up the mighty *Wizard* HQ and quickly learned that not only were we bullpenners fans of video wrestling, we were fans of live wrestling as well. After swapping translations (turns out we both had some right, some wrong), Harry brought about a dozen of the unruly *Wizard* Bullpenners front row and backstage to the most insane show on earth: an ECW event.

Tremendous Violence!
Don't take our word for it–if you like pro wrestling and haven't seen ECW yet, you HAVE to check it out. On the East Coast it's on the MSG network every Sunday morning at 1:00 a.m., everywhere else, go read the TV Guide. Not recommended for sissies.

"It's like watching a group of real life, Warner Bros. cartoons trying really, really hard to kill each other," *ToyFare* Copy Editor Dan DiGiacomo said after watching the event. "It's not like the WWF or the WCW at all. These guys are over the top. Diving into the crowd, jumping off balconies, power-bombing people through two tables...the types of horrible acts of violence that would make Wile E. Coyote proud."

We're thinkin' that mask is just too tight.

Now as long as Wizard Corporate doesn't institute random drug-testing, we're home free!

TOP 10 OTHER things Todd McFarlane plans on buying

10 A really expensive football
9 A financial adviser
8 Walt Disney's cryogenically frozen brain and a crazed, giant gorilla
7 A really, really, really, really, really big TV
6 The smile on the Mona Lisa's face–and that stupid screaming guy
5 1,000 monkeys to put at 1,000 typewriters (just to see what happens)
4 The Brooklyn Bridge–or maybe Lloyd Bridges
3 *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Auctioning*
2 A high-powered, gold-plated toilet to dispose of money more efficiently
1 Bacon. All of it.

CBIQ answers...

1. C 4. A 7. A 10. A
2. B 5. B 8. C 11. D
3. C 6. C 9. B 12. A

ONE OF THE DAMNED

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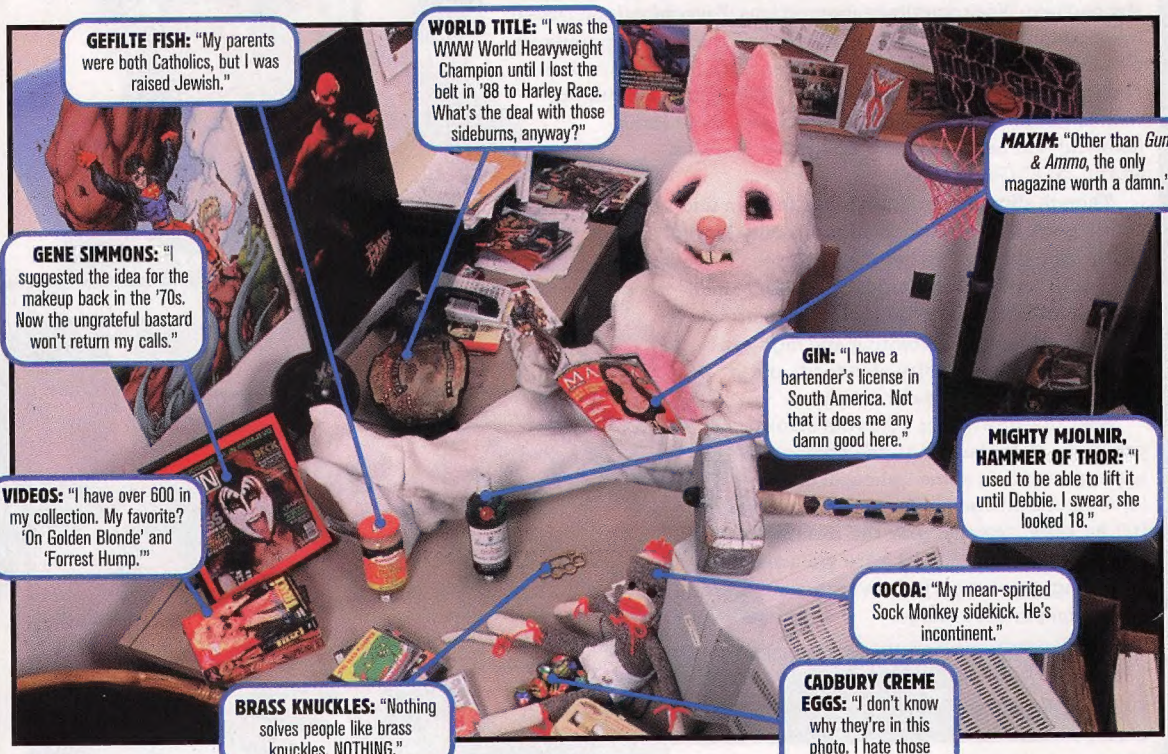
WHY WE PAY HIM: "Accounting error. God, I love this country."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE: "I'll keep squeezing tighter and tighter until I see the life fade from your eyes." (In reference to killing a delivery boy. Not really out of context.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT: "I was in over the weekend stealing some office supplies when *Wizard* Publisher Gareb Shamus came out of his office with a ball-gag in his mouth. We just kinda stood there in awkward silence, looking at each other. We've never spoken of it."



PHOTOS: PAUL SCHEFALDI. SPECIAL THANKS TO HARRY SLASH AND THE ECW FOR PROVIDING THE CHAMPIONSHIP BELT.

TIME TRAVEL by RUSSELL LISSAU

IMAGE BOOSTER

Rob Liefeld and company launched Image Comics with 'Youngblood' seven years ago

Take it or leave it.

That's what Marvel and DC Comics said to comic book writers and artists for decades when it came to creator credits, higher royalties, or a share in the profits. The two publishers controlled the characters and the cash flow, and they were practically the only places a creator could go for work. The only other option—moving to a small press company—was hardly an option at all. To be labeled a "small press" creator at that time was the kiss of death. But by 1992, six of the industry's hottest artists, all of whom worked for Marvel, said enough was enough, and Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Marc Silvestri, Erik Larsen and Jim Valentino bucked the system by forming their own company: Image Comics. At Image, creators would retain the rights to their characters and have absolute control over story development and profits. It was perhaps the riskiest move the comic book industry had ever seen.

The gamble paid off. Image's first release, *Youngblood* #1, debuted that April. Plotted and penciled by Liefeld, it sold 930,000 copies, making it the highest-selling creator-owned comic ever (until McFarlane's *Spawn* #1 sold 1.7 million copies the next month). Just as Image broke new ground, so did *Youngblood*: its heroes were celebrities with their own publicists. Likewise, Image emphasized...well, image. Its books focused on artwork using state-of-the-art computer coloring and high-quality paper, making its first releases unlike anything from the Big Two.

But all did not go smoothly at Image. By 1995, too much creative freedom proved to be its key weakness. Books were shipped late. Weak storylines angered fans. *Youngblood* and Liefeld were frequent targets of fans' wrath, and the book's popularity plummeted. Eventually, many of these earlier books, including *Youngblood*, slipped into obscurity. The creators splintered, with Liefeld leaving to form his own Awesome Entertainment and Lee selling his Image studio, WildStorm, to DC Comics.

Though diminished, Image has broken into the comic book elite once occupied by only Marvel and DC, turning the Big Two into the Big Three. Image opened the doors for creator-owned books and small-press publishers to be accepted by the mainstream. It established computer coloring and high-quality paper as the industry standard, and it raised the average creator salary.

And the publisher remains strong, promises McFarlane. "All the companies are experiencing some upheaval of late—it just seems Image gets more attention for it," he says. "Every year the demise of Image is predicted, and here we are, surviving quite nicely. Don't start a collection plate for Image!"

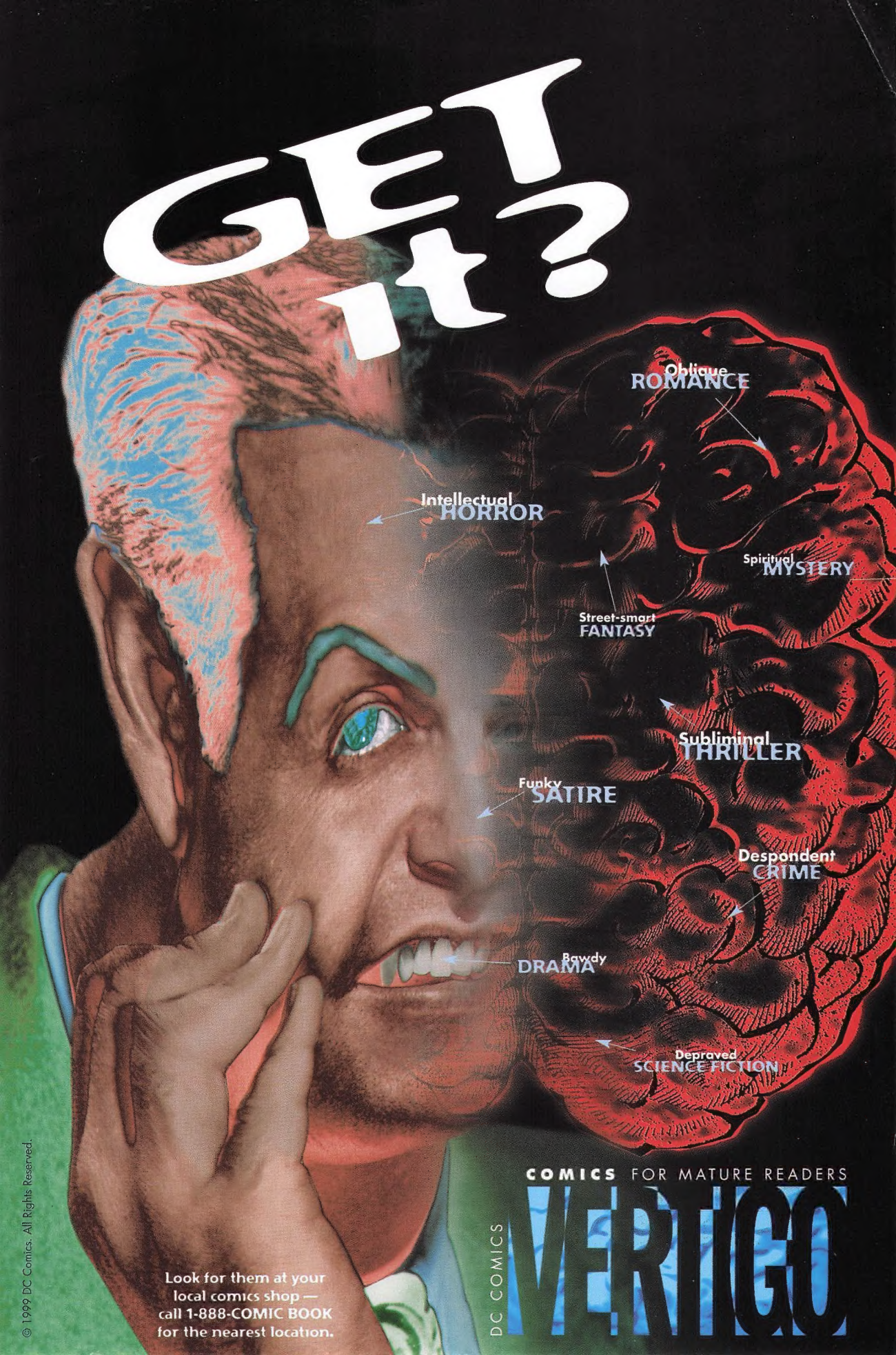
DATELINE

APRIL 1992

Audiences see Sharon Stone show off her, um, acting ability in the sex-thriller "**Basic Instinct**"...Pre-teen rappers Kris Kross top the singles charts with backwards pants and the hit song "**Jump**"..."**Home Improvement**" nails a top-five slot in the Nielsen ratings in its first season on television...Rioters ravage Los Angeles after four police officers are acquitted in the **Rodney King** beating.

STONE IN 'BASIC INSTINCT'

OKAY, WHO FARTED? It was Liefeld, with co-writer Hank Kanalz, who kicked off Image with Shaft (art shown above) and *Youngblood*. (As for who squeaked one out, our money's on Valentino.)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